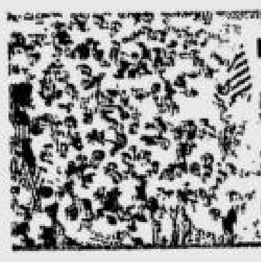

- **WORLD / A28**

500,000 in LA slam immigration crackdown

- **METRO / A26**

Pinoy figure-skating ice hockey teacher one of Asia's best

- **BUSINESS / B3-1**

Junior taipans to ask China to invest in RP

- **ENTERTAINMENT / A2-1**

More mainstream stars doing indie movies

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BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Monday, March 27, 2006 ★★ 6 sections / Vol. 21 / No. 109 P18 website: www.inq7.net

70-year-old is festival's fastest tobacco roller

PANGONTRA KO ITO SA SAKIT NG TIYAN!

By Leoncio Balbin Jr.
PDI N. Luzon Bureau

CANDON CITY—TERESITA Galanto, at the age of 70, makes liars of those who say smoking is dangerous to your health.

Galanto first lit a roll of tobacco grown in her native

70-YEAR-OLD/ A8

'Abadilla 5' death convicts seek help of United Nations

By Juliet Labog-Javellana

TWO OF THE FIVE CONVICTS WHO HAVE BEEN sentenced to death under a cloud of controversy for the killing of a dreaded military officer 10 years ago have complained to the United Nations about the undue delay in the resolution of their case.

The two death convicts—Lenido Lumanog and Augusto Santos—have filed a complaint against

ABADILLA/ A22

Senators to block Cha-cha campaign

GMA allies in House confident of victory

By TJ Burgonio and Michael Lim Ubac

AN ADMINISTRATION senator yesterday served notice of the Senate's determination to block a Malacañang-backed signature campaign to change the Constitution, while two other senators said the Supreme Court could decide the battle.

Mincing no words, however, House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles indicated that the majority party was prepared to fight it out with the Senate to push through with the so-called people's initiative as a mode of amending the 19-year-old Charter.

"Let's see who is the last man standing," Nograles told the INQUIRER.

The verbal exchange was triggered by the launch of a people's initiative using barangays across the country to gather signatures to support the proposal to rewrite the Constitution and install a parliamentary system in place of the country's presidential form of government.

President Macapagal-Arroyo is herself engaged in the campaign to set up a parliamentary system in what critics said was part of her efforts to survive the political crisis hounding her since the "Hello Garci" scandal broke out nine months ago.

A group supporting Charter change, the Sigaw ng Bayan Coalition, claimed the people's initiative had collected four million signatures as of Sunday and that only one million more signatures were needed to comply with the constitutional require-

SENATORS/ A23

Marcosian ploy seen in 'people's initiative'

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

THE ARROYO ADMINISTRATION has launched its campaign to undertake a fundamental revision of the 1987 Constitution through a "people's initiative," whipping up straightway a political storm over its dubious legality and the methods used to galvanize grass-roots signatures to support the initiative.

In a move attacked by her critics as a "desperate" act of regime survival, President Macapagal-Arroyo kicked off the drive with her back against the wall, after she had repulsed a sustained siege of her opponents to oust her, including numerous "people power" calls, an impeachment complaint in the House of Representatives and, only in February, a coup attempt.

The attempted coup was the most serious case of military intervention to unseat her since she took office in January 2001.

Ms Arroyo's survival against this widely ranging repertoire of challenges—some outright extraconstitutional and others within the parliamentary framework—reveals her resilience.

But, more than that, it underlines the acute issue that, unless the underlying question of her legitimacy is resolved, she will not be allowed any moment of peace.

In falling back on a people's initiative as one of the modes spelled out to revise the Constitution, the President is trying to turn the tables on the militants of the Gloria-resign movement that had believed they could mobilize people power behind them, but failed, much to their grief.

Ms Arroyo is now trying to deploy people power in reverse—tap the rural-based people power and pit it against the urban-based people power that had been the recruitment base of People Power I and II.

This sharpens the deep social and political cleavage dividing the city and country political con-

MARCOSIAN/ A22

OPERATORS, collectors and bettors of the PCSO's Small Town Lottery, who were arrested during police raids in Quezon City, are presented to media at Camp Karingal, along with the confiscated cash and betting paraphernalia.

RAFFY LERMA

QC clamps down on STL; cops arrest 63

By DJ Yap
Metro
and Luige A. del Puerto

CONFUSION MARKED THE TEST run of the "Small Town Lottery," with police raiding outlets in Quezon City over the weekend.

The STL is a project of the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) that is supposed to replace the illegal numbers game "jueteng."

Police said that as far they knew, STL operations were "still on hold." But an official of the Department of Interior and Local Government said Malacañang had given the PCSO one year to conduct STL test runs.

"The PCSO is authorized by law, by its charter, to operate games of chance," according to Interior Assistant Secretary Bryan Yamsuan.

Yamsuan said there was an agreement to conduct STL test runs over the weekend. "(But) if there is no (mayor's) permit, if there are illegal bookies, then we will make arrests," he said.

Quezon City's clampdown on the STL went into full swing the other night following the raid on four outlets and the arrest of more than 60 operators and collectors.

Top executives of Benchmark Acquisition International Corp., the STL franchise holder in the city, were "invited for questioning" but later released. No charges were filed.

In separate "blitzkrieg opera-

QC CLAMPS/ A8

CSC reels from GMA prerogative to appoint execs

By Jerry E. Esplanada

(First of three parts)

SPECIAL REPORT

THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT has repeatedly abused its prerogative to appoint thousands of government executives, many of whom either have questionable backgrounds or lack civil service eligibility and other necessary credentials.

No less than Civil Service Commission Chair Karina Constantino-David made the disclosure in an interview with the INQUIRER.

The abuse has become endemic, noted David, who has been head of the independent constitutional body since 2001.

The Arroyo administration has been treating the bureaucracy as something that is answerable to its whims and not to civil service regulations, according to David.

(The CSC chair is the wife of Randy David, a university professor and INQUIRER columnist who was among the demonstrators arrested immediately after the Feb. 24 declaration by President Macapagal-Arroyo of the short-lived state of national emergency.)

Karina David cited several presidential appointee-related cases that had challenged the commission's mandate as the overseer of the state workforce and source of expert advice on public personnel administration.

A case in point is Dr. Esperanza Abriol whom the Palace named administrator of the presidential Mansion in Baguio City.

Abriol was already 73 when she assumed the post last year.

CSC REELS/ A21

[illegible]apel built on hope draws steady stream of pilgrims

By Christian V. Esguerra

EVERYTHING THE FILIPINO EVERYMAN probably needs to know to survive the raging crises can be found in a low-key chapel in Marikina City.

There is always hope, this is the reminder radiating from the Chapel of the Magnificat, a majestic, octagonal structure at the entrance to the Marist School in Barangay Marikina Heights.

The chapel was built around the theme "Order out of Chaos" six years ago amid calls for the ouster of then President Joseph Estrada for allegedly plundering the public coffers.

With history seemingly repeating itself today, Bro. Manuel de Leon, the man who had it built in time for the Church's Jubilee Year, believes the message has more relevance now.

"One message our history and faith always teaches us is the permanence of hope whatever the odds," he tells the INQUIRER.

The chapel was also built on hope.

It took the school more than 12 years to come up with the P25 million needed to build the chapel along with the commitment and invaluable help of its alumni and the community, says De Leon, head of the Marist Brothers of the Philippines.

Today, the Chapel of the Magnificat attracts a steady stream of pilgrims. Not a few visitors have been drawn by its rich symbolism pertaining to a "contemporary concept of Filipino spirituality," says De Leon.

The central figure is the backdrop of the

CHAPEL/ A21

A MASSIVE face of Jesus is the altar backdrop of the Chapel of the Magnificat.

JOAN BONDOC

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and isolated thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy skies with isolated brief rainshowers or thunderstorms.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, PDI RESEARCH/03/26/06

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

TEVES ADVISES SOLONS TO DEBATE CHARTER

'Remove onerous economic provisions'

By Tonette Orejas, *PDI Central Luzon Desk*

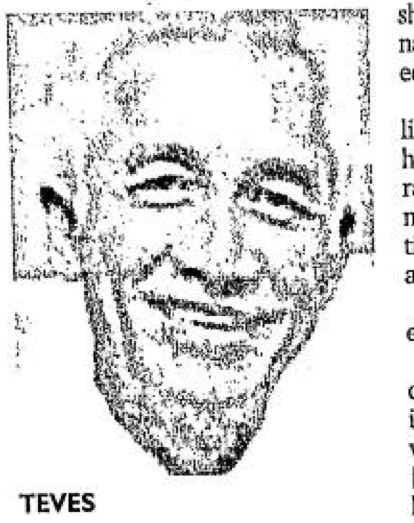
CLARK SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE—FINANCE Secretary Margarito Teves said Congress should begin debating the economic provisions of the 1987 Constitution and agree to remove its restrictive policies to draw more foreign investments into the country.

"As an individual and as a student of economics, I'd like to see something take place at a minimum which is to move the economic provisions away from the Constitution and that these be debated in Congress," Teves told reporters here on Friday.

At this time, however, legislators still differ over the mode for changing the Constitution. The House of Representatives wants to convene itself as a constituent assembly while the Senate wants to call a constitutional commission that would entail electing its own delegates.

Aside from liberalizing the economy, the Charter change agenda includes the switch to a parliamentary form of government that critics of President Macapagal-Arroyo said would keep her in power longer.

Teves told business leaders and government officials of Central Luzon on Friday that he was sad over having many provisions in the Constitution that limit the equity of non-Filipino investors to only 40 percent in key economic sectors.



TEVES

He said he was "hoping that Congress itself would move toward the direction of what most countries are doing, which is for liberal type of provisions."

The Malacañang-formed Consultative Commission on Charter change proposed the removal of the protectionist policies on the ownership of land, use and exploitation of natural resources, public utilities, education and mass media.

Teves said other Asian countries like China, Indonesia and Vietnam have enjoyed 7 to 9 percent growth rates because they had decided to make their countries more attractive by improving their regulatory and business environments.

No more coups—rumors or otherwise—would help, he added.

"I'm just saying that we'd like to continue working on the economic and fiscal reform agenda and if we're successful, together with [the soldiers'] help, this would have a favorable spillover effect on the military and other sectors of our economy," Teves said.

Teves said it helped that the economic team stayed "focused" on its work as the national leadership quelled the coup plot in late February.

"So far that strategy has worked well for us," he said.

Revenue collections from January to February this year reached P136.9 billion, up by 9.1 percent for the same period last year.

The national government's deficit in 2005 has been tamed, representing 2.7 percent of the gross domestic product, he said.

Diwa Guinigundo, deputy governor of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, said investors and market players put "greater risk premiums" on the peso when political developments turned adverse to the government.

Trade Undersecretary Elmer Hernandez said "any political noise will definitely have an impact on foreign direct investments."

Solon cries foul over disclosure of COA report

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE FINDINGS OF THE COMMISSION on Audit that part of the recovered Marcos wealth was used to purchase allegedly overpriced liquid fertilizer were not yet final but had already damaged the "reputations" of several lawmakers, a congressional leader said yesterday.

House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles accused Senate President Franklin Drilon of trying to further politicize the issue of the controversial P728-million Department of Agriculture fertilizer fund through the "premature disclosure of the COA report."

"If there are initial and preliminary adverse findings in the COA audit, the suspected respondents are immediately notified and given time to refute the findings or the report. After which a final report is made by COA which now becomes the basis for filing cases usually in the Ombudsman Office or the proper court," said Nograles.

He said that Drilon was fully aware of the audit procedure.

According to Nograles, the leak of the COA findings might cause irreparable damage to the reputations of innocent personalities before they can explain their side.

Based on the audit report prepared by DA's supervising auditor Flerida Jimenez, three NGOs received a total of P29 million in Marcos funds to buy farm inputs under the DA's Ginintuang Masaganang Ani (GMA) program.

Several lawmakers like Representatives Nanette Castelo-Daza, Federico Sandoval, Eduardo Zialcita, Antonio Cuenco, Simeon Kintanar and Antonio Yapha had cried foul when their names cropped up during the Senate inquiry into the fertilizer scam.

The COA report so far connected Yapha to the purchase of fertilizer in the second and third districts of Cebu. Yapha earlier denied he was involved.

The opposition had claimed that Marcos funds might have been used by President Macapagal-Arroyo in her campaign during the 2004 election.

In Cebu City, the DA in Central Visayas has denied any involvement in the irregularities uncovered by the COA.

The Kasosyo Foundation, an NGO associated with Yapha, reportedly got P6 million from the fertilizer fund.

DA-7 director Eduardo Lecciones said he did not know the money used was part of the Marcos funds and that the fertilizer was grossly overpriced by 1,092 percent.

Lecciones said that if there was overpricing in the purchase of fertilizer, DA-7 had nothing to do with it.

Lecciones said they just transferred the funds to the Kasosyo Foundation which in turn purchased the fertilizer.

"Our role was only as a conduit of these funds based on the authority given to us by our central office," Lecciones said. *With a report from Jhunnex Napallacan, PDI Visayas Bureau*

Bernas statement draws barbs, stirs 'initiative' debate

By Christine O. Avendaño and Christian Esguerra

A HECKLER? OR PLAIN BRILLIANT? It depends on where you stand.

Hornets continued to fly fast and sting after constitutional expert Fr. Joaquin Bernas stirred the nest by dismissing as a "desperate" act the current effort to amend the Constitution through a people's initiative.

Though Malacañang steadfastly denied it had a hand in moves to gather millions of pro-Charter-change signatures from the grassroots, it could not resist assailing Bernas for making his observation.

"Heckling does not become Fr. Bernas," Gabriel Claudio, political adviser of President Macapagal-Arroyo, said.

"There is nothing desperate about millions of people exercising their constitutional right to directly propose changes in the basic law that will make the political system more efficient and harmonious and better able to fight poverty, corruption, instability and economic retardation," Claudio said.

Claudio was reacting to Bernas' statement on Friday that proponents of Charter change through a people's initiative were "probably desperate" because such an option faced serious constitutional and legal questions.

Claudio's tirade came on the heels of that unleashed Friday by Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, who branded Bernas a "guru of destabilization."

Yesterday, Catholic Church figures rallied behind Bernas, a Jesuit priest, and returned Gonzalez's salvo.

"One cannot question Fr. Bernas' integrity and intellectual brilliance which are wanting in the present secretary of justice," Bro. Manuel de Leon, vice chair of the influential Association of Major Religious Superiors of the Philippines (AMRSP), said.

Fr. Ben Moraleda, a missionary priest and head of the interfaith group Sinag, described Gonzalez as a "clown of a secretary of injustice and partisan morality."

Since Bernas' statements were "timely, brilliant and true," Moraleda said, Gonzalez naturally took exception to them "in blind and stupid obedience to his despotic boss in Malacañang."

If in the eyes of Gonzalez someone like Bernas was a destabilizer, Moraleda said, Christians and Church leaders should then follow Bernas's lead and "continue to destabilize the status quo (so) that truth and justice will reign again in this land."

Another Sinag convenor, Benedictine nun Sister Mary Manahan, remarked, "It's amazing how (he) can surpass himself in saying the most stupid things. Who in the world takes him seriously?"

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33,958	22,639	16,979	12,678	10,188	8,965
47,500	31,667	23,750	17,733	14,250	12,540
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No reason for budget delay – Bunye

MALACAÑANG SEES NO REASON FOR the Senate not to be able to act swiftly on passing the much-delayed P1-trillion national budget for 2006.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye noted the Senate had held "advanced" hearings on the budget even before this was approved by the House of Representatives.

"That's why we don't see any hindrance to its approval," Bunye told RMN radio yesterday in an interview.

The House last week passed the proposed 2006 budget three months into 2006. The government is currently operating under the reenacted 2005 budget. This was the third year in a row the budget had been delayed, forcing the government to operate on the previous year's outlay.

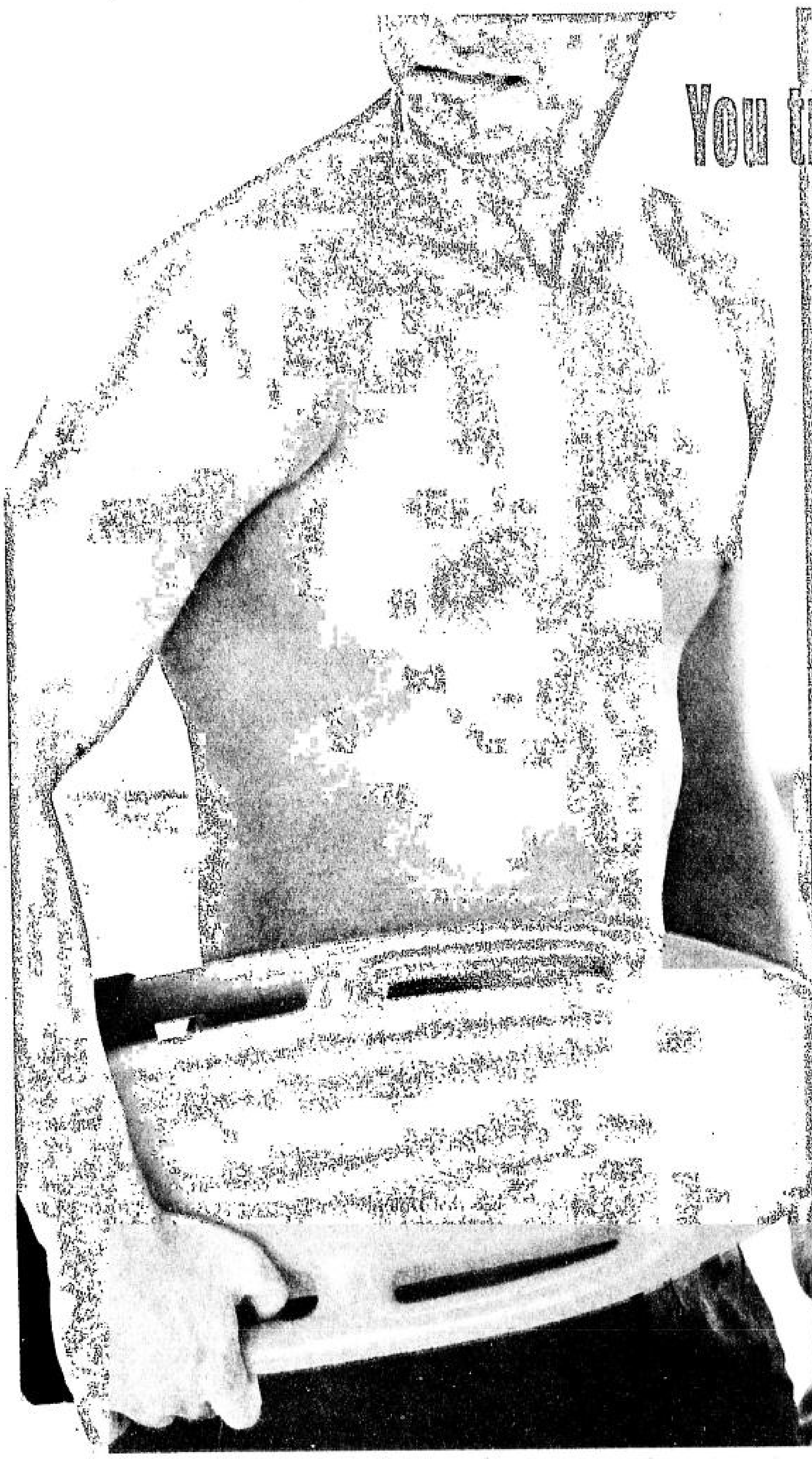
But while the House had been deliberating on the budget, known as the General Appropriations Act for 2006, the Senate had convened itself into a committee of the whole in order to start its own discussions on the measure.

Bunye said the House was likely to submit the budget to the Senate this week.

"We know that at the proper time, the Senate would need to act on it," he said.

Bunye made the statements after he was asked how Malacañang intended to push for the P40-billion defense program announced by President Macapagal-Arroyo in Baguio City the other day, in the event the Senate did not pass the budget measure.

Christine O. Avendaño



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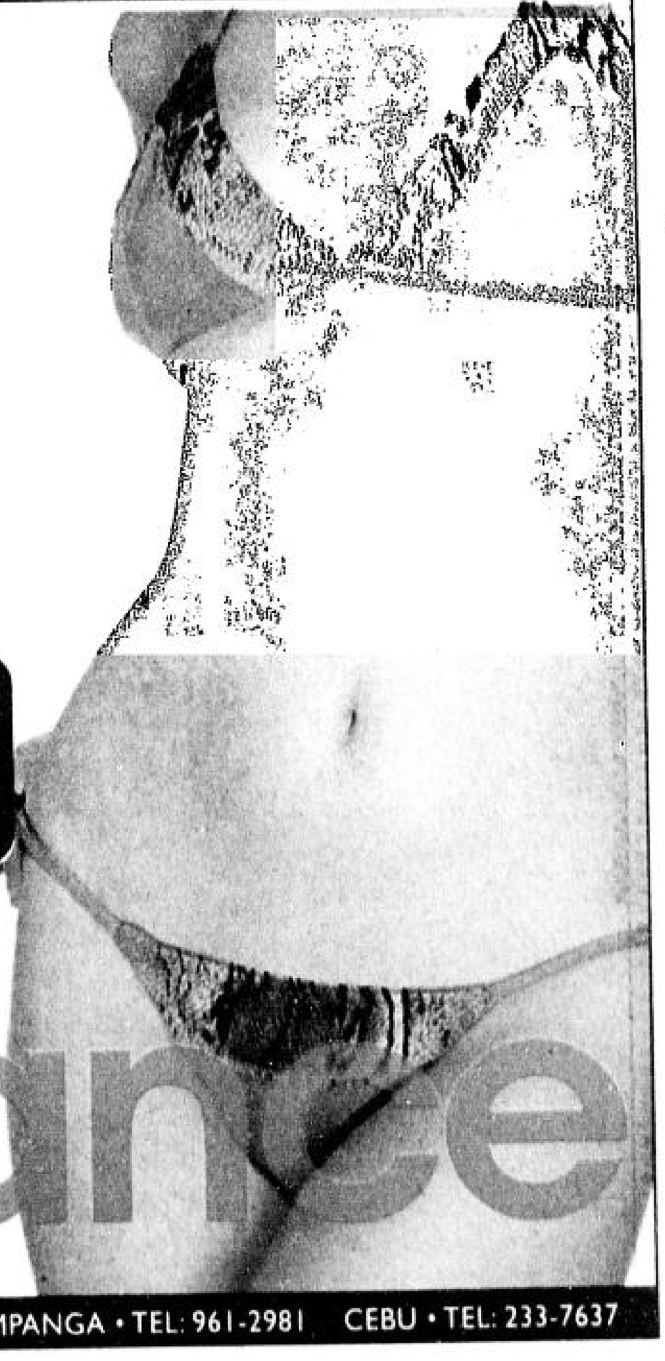

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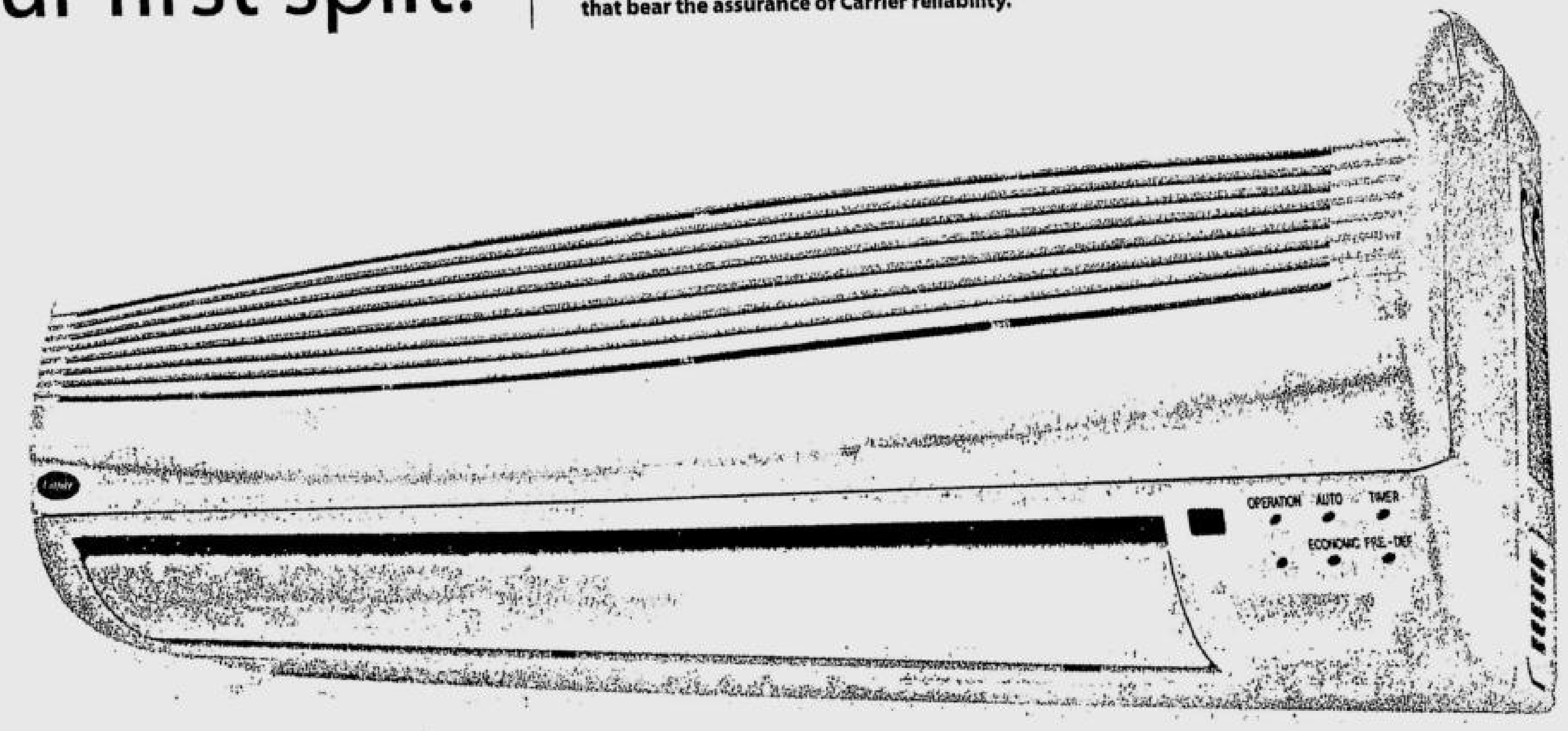

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Fake SSS claimants arrested

LOOKS CAN BE DECEIVING.

An elderly man and two elderly women could have passed for real pensioners of the Social Security System since they were carrying SSS identification cards.

But the police found that they were members of a syndicate posing as legitimate SSS pensioners and promptly arrested the trio.

The SSS loses some P1 billion annually due to fraudulent claims, the police said.

The fake SSS pensioners were identified as Floro Corpin, Emerita Camasis and Adelaida Osit.

They face charges of falsification of public documents and estafa, the police said.

Police arrested them while they were trying to withdraw P250,000 from the Philippine National Bank branch at the Quezon Memorial Circle in Quezon City.

The trio had been able to open bank accounts at PNB by posing as SSS claimants.

In a statement, the police said Corpin admitted that he posed as Eugenio Cosme Cruz, an SSS claimant from Manila.

The trio were believed to have withdrawn half a million pesos from the PNB in January, the police said.

The entries in their SSS "ID cards" were correct. All they needed to do to pull off the con was to place their own pictures on the cards, according to Sr. Supt. Benjamin de los Santos, chief of the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group's antifraud unit.

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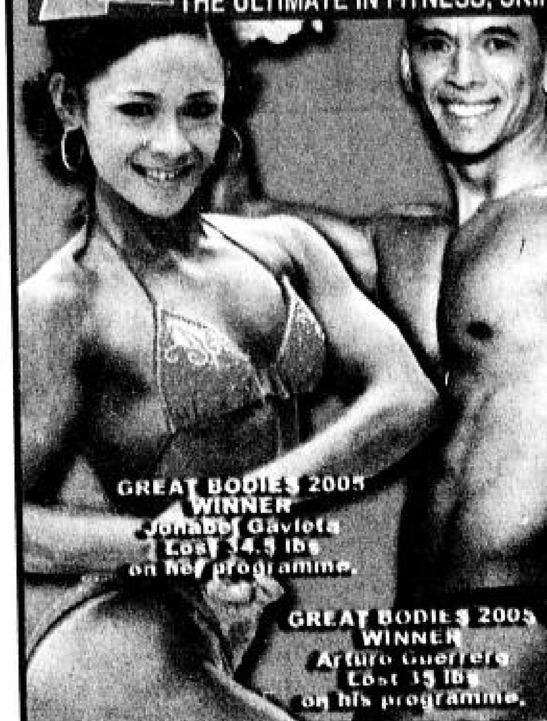

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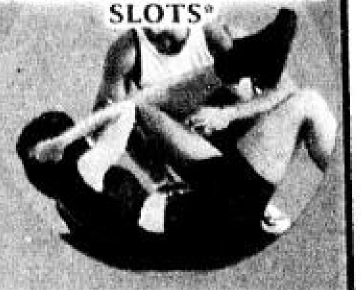

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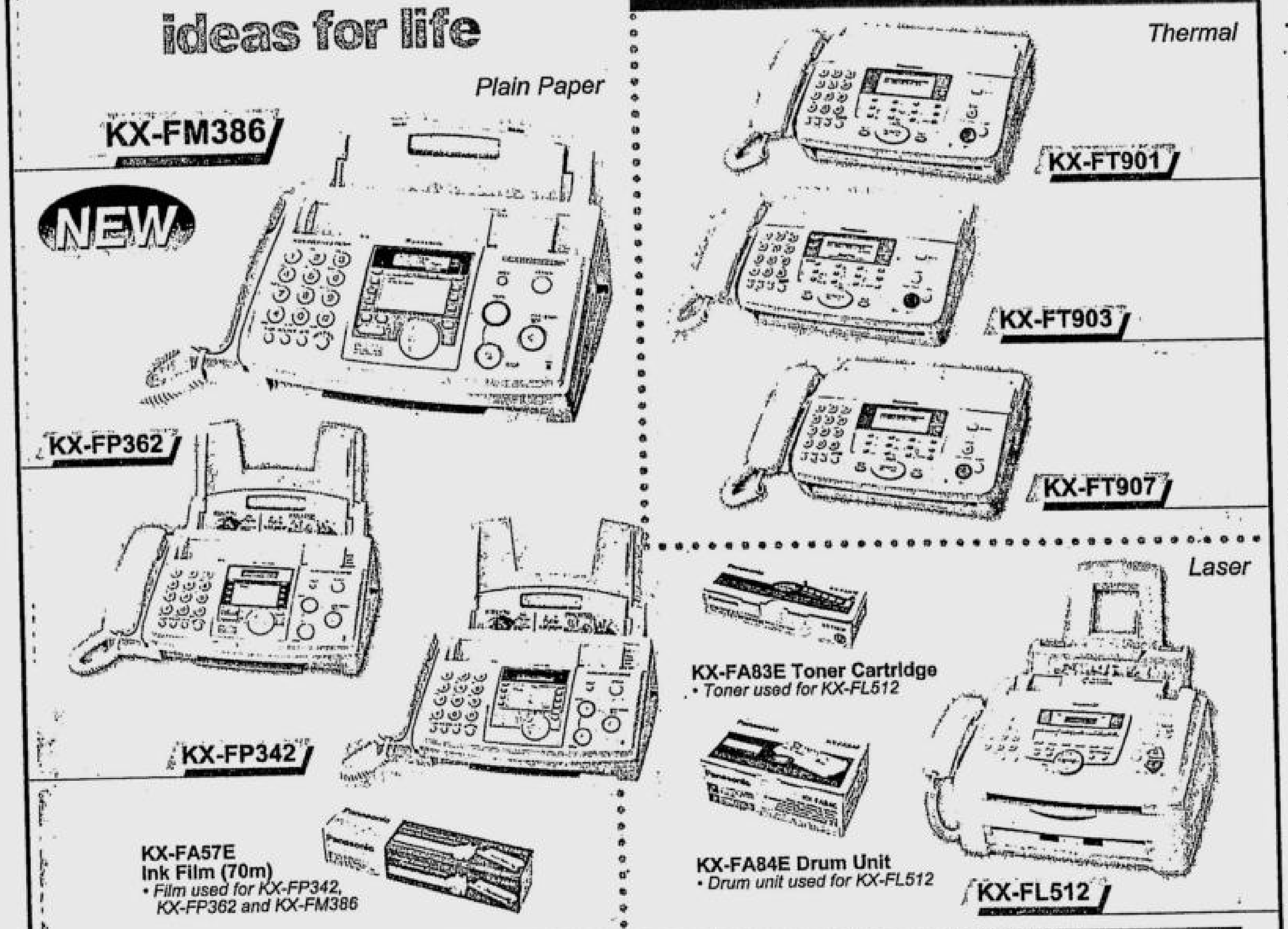

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Pope appoints new bishop to Iligan see

By Jerome Aning

POPE BENEDICT XVI HAS APpointed a new bishop for the Diocese of Iligan in Lanao del Norte, which had no prelate for nearly two years.

Msgr. Elenito Galido, 51, is the second Mindanao-born bishop appointed to a diocese on the island by the Vatican, according to Fr. James Reuter SJ of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines' National Office of Mass Media.

The first was Cagayan de Oro City-born Honesto Pacana SJ who was appointed bishop of Malaybalay (Bukidnon) in 1994.

The appointment to Mindanao of bishops who were born or had ministered for many years on the island "could be a mild indication of the direction in which the Vatican is moving," Reuter said.

He noted that the Iligan diocese was close to Muslim territory.

Galido's appointment was published at noon last Saturday (Rome time) and simultaneously announced in Manila at 7 p.m. by Charge d'Affairés Msgr. Jain Jimenez of the Apostolic Nunciature.

Galido will be taking over from apostolic administrator Fr. Ramon Fruto, who had been overseeing the see since June 2004 when Bishop Emilio Bataclan was transferred to Cebu for health reasons.

Born in Managok, Malaybalay, Galido had his basic education in that city and studied Theology at the St. Francis Xavier Regional Major Seminary in Davao. He was ordained a priest at the age of 25.

He became spiritual director of the College Seminary of Malaybalay in 1979-82 and its rector until 1989. He was concurrently chancellor of the Malaybalay See and vicar general in 1986-88, holding the latter position up to 1998.

Galido also served as parish priest of the Immaculate Conception Parish in Kibawe, director of the Bukidnon Institute of Catechetics and administrator of San Isidro Cathedral in Malaybalay.

He later obtained his Masters of Arts in Pastoral Counseling and Spiritual Care in New York City. While studying, he served as associate priest at the St. Francis de Sales Church in Belle Harbor, Brooklyn.

Populated by Christianized Maranao tribes and other settlers during the Spanish period, Iligan was made a prelature in 1971 under the Archdiocese of Cagayan de Oro. It was elevated to a diocese in 1982 and later became a suffragan of the Ozamiz archdiocese.

Galido's appointment leaves five Philippine dioceses still vacant: Bangued in Abra; Calbayog, Western Samar; Ipil, Zamboanga Sibugay; Laoag, Ilocos Norte, and Tagbilaran, Bohol.

Customs chief named new head of agency against smuggling

By Leila B. Salaverria

MORALES

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARroyo has designated the commissioner of the Bureau of Customs as head of the Task Force on Anti-Smuggling and named as its members officials of eight government agencies, including the Armed Forces and the police.

The designations were contained in Executive Order No. 509 dated March 15 which became effective immediately.

Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales was officially informed Thursday, according to a BOC source who requested anonymity.

With the issuance of EO 509—a copy of which was obtained by the INQUIRER—the leadership of the Task Force on Anti-Smuggling was transferred from the interior secretary to the BOC commissioner.

The BOC is tasked to collect P191.5 billion in taxes in 2006.

Former Interior and now Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes, who used to head the task force, had earlier objected to the appointment of Morales as customs commissioner.

The Task Force on Anti-Smuggling under Reyes had filed in March 2005 a graft complaint against customs officials at the Port of Batangas then headed by Morales for the allegedly questionable release of a cornstarch shipment.

Morales denied the task force's accusations.

The Task Force on Anti-Smuggling was created in 2004 through EO 385, which named the DILG secretary as its head and gave him the authority to choose the task force's personnel.

This time, EO 509 listed eight members of the task force, namely the Armed Forces chief of staff, the Philippine National Police chief, the National Bureau of Investigation director, the chief state prosecutor of the National Prosecution Service, the Philippine Coast Guard commandant, the Philippine Ports Authority general manager, the director general of the National Intelligence Coordinating Agency and the chief of the PNP's Criminal Investigation and Detection Group.

"The utilization of government resources in its campaign against smuggling needs to be optimized," EO 509 stated.

Corrections

IN THE MARCH 23 ISSUE, a front-page story—"Palace to regulate all gov't ad budgets"—misstated the 2004 ad budget of the Government Service Insurance System. According to official records, the 2004 ad budget of the GSIS amounted to only P5,203—not P5.2 million. A GSIS official said the agency slashed its expenses for TV, radio and print ads in 2004 following its big information campaign in 2003 when ad expenses reached more than P677,000.

* * *

IN THE March 26 ISSUE, a front-page story—"Valedictorian urges 'life of daily heroism'"—misstated the relationship of Marlou Toledo to the Philippine Military Academy valedictorian, 2nd Lt. Ariel Toledo. Marlou Toledo is Ariel's brother—not sister.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

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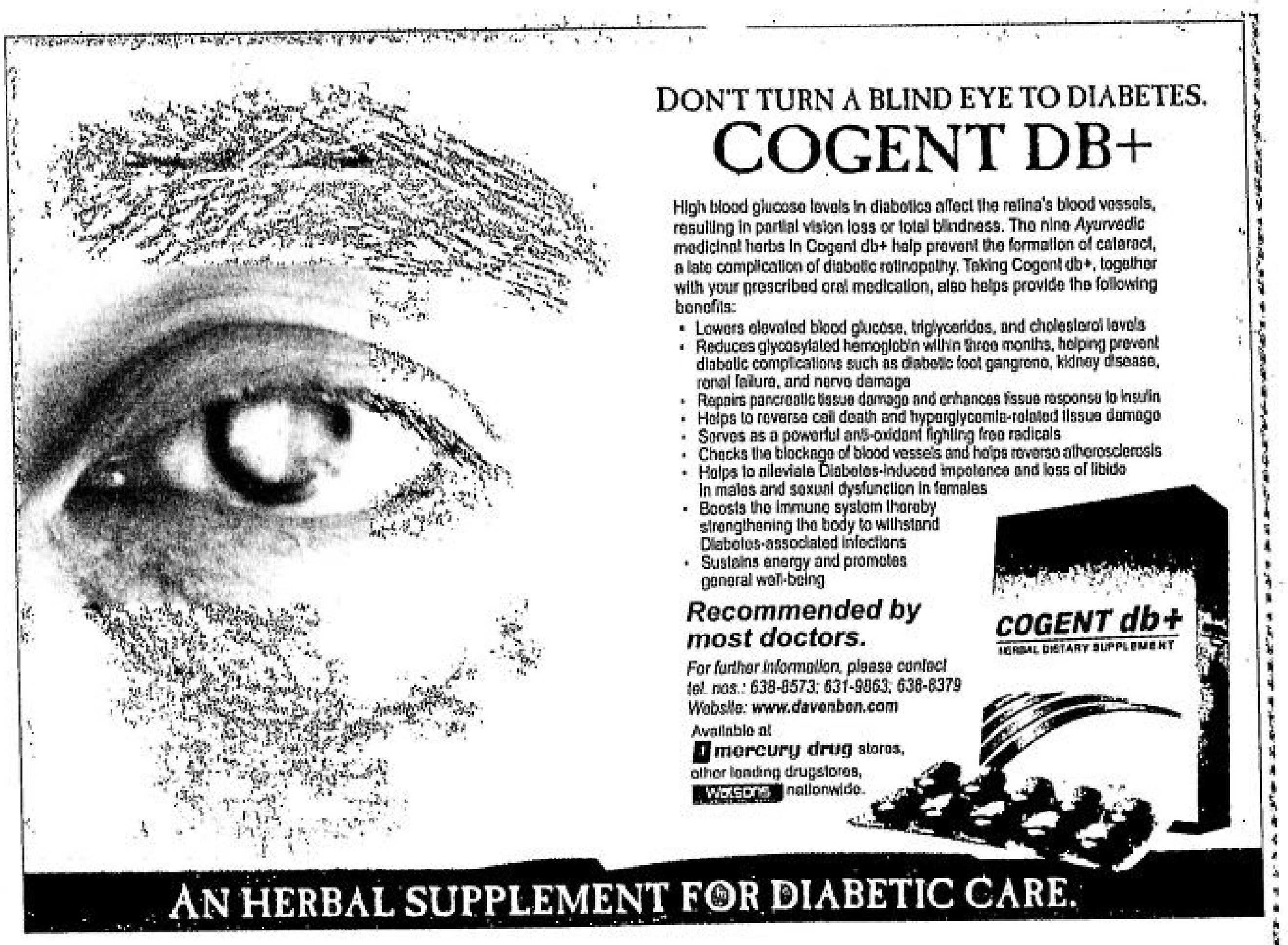

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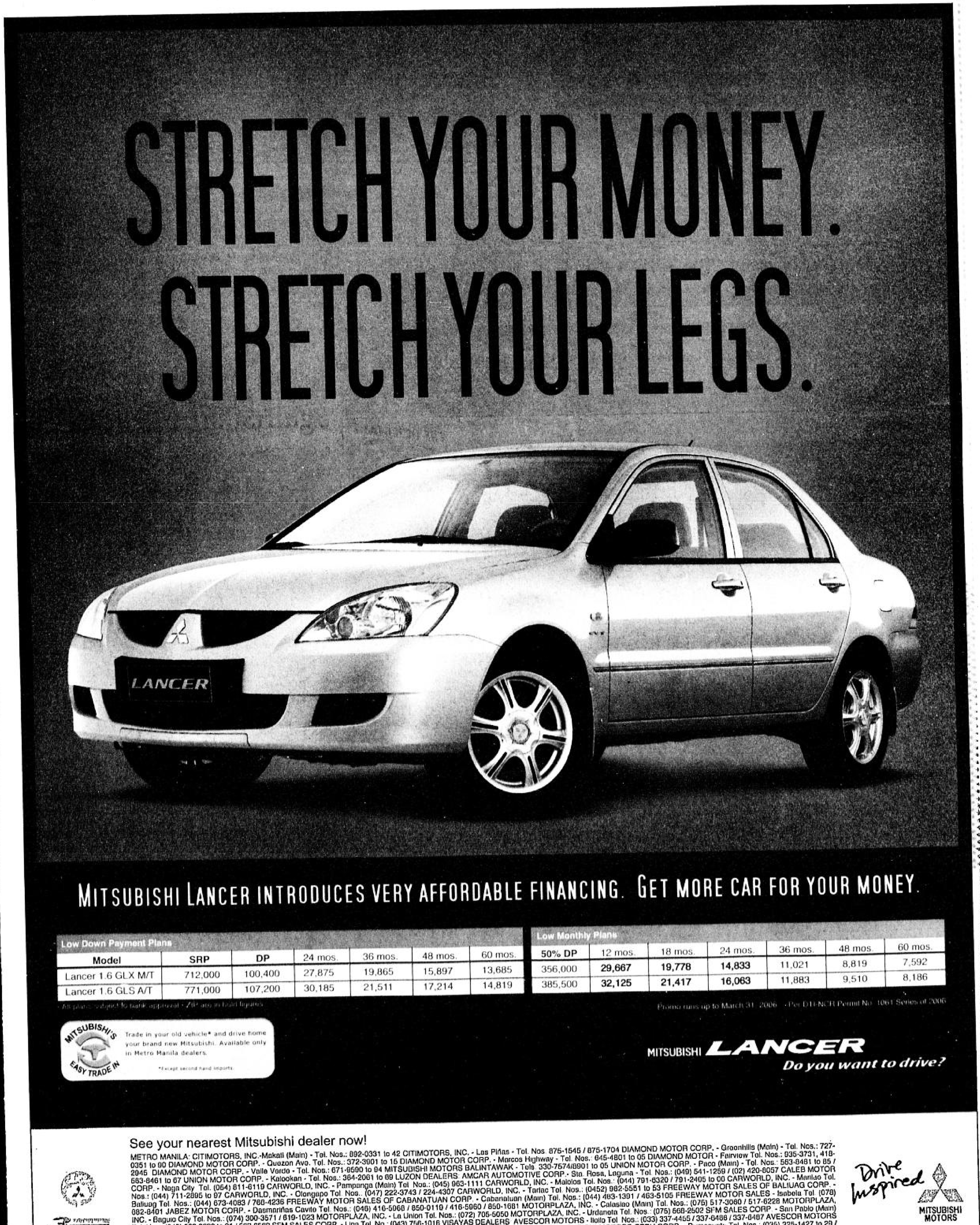

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QC clamps down on STL; cops arrest 63

From page A1

tions" that began Saturday afternoon, police raided the STL head office on East Avenue and three outlets in Barangays Project 2, Holy Spirit and Culiat.

Seized from the offices were computers, betting lists, blank ID cards, collection money amounting to more than P20,000 and other gambling paraphernalia.

Police arrested 63 collectors and operators and invited five Benchmark officers for questioning, namely, president and general manager Jojie Atienza, chief executive officer Alvin Atienza, assistant operations manager Prospero Atienza, general manager Crisostomo Miranda Jr. and draw assistant April Atienza.

Benchmark lawyer Arnold Bayobay said the five company officers were only asked to explain their operations at Camp Karingal, the Quezon City Police District headquarters, and were allowed to go yesterday afternoon.

Mayor orders crackdown

The raids were conducted in response to a directive issued by Mayor Feliciano Belmonte Jr. on Saturday to crack down on all illegal gambling activities, said Chief Supt. Nicasio Radovan Jr., Quezon City Police District director.

Five of those arrested, who turned out to be PCSO employees, were later released after the PCSO vouched for them, according to police. Their names were not immediately available.

The rest, who remained in police custody, were employees working on commission basis as bet collectors and agents for Benchmark. They were presented before the media at the Camp Karingal grandstand yesterday.

"We are filing charges like (violations of) Presidential Decree No. 1602 (Illegal Gambling Act), City Ordinance No. SP-91, series of 1993, and the Quezon City Revenue Code against them," Belmonte said.

The mayor said the city was putting its foot down on all STL operations, unless the PCSO or Benchmark secured the proper permits.

"All PCSO businesses here in Quezon City have mayor's permits, except the STL," he said at a press conference at Camp Karingal.

He added that since the PCSO had made no representations with his office regarding STL, the city considered it to be the operation of a private entity, or Benchmark.

Cops unaware of memo

On Friday night, stakeholders met to flesh out the operations of STL, according to Yamsuan.

"There is a memo from (PCSO General Manager Rosario) Uriarte saying that based on its (the PCSO's) mandate, it will operate (the lottery). It specifically informed us that they will operate," he said.

Police officials apparently did not know about the memorandum yet.

"As far as the PNP is concerned, the implementing rules must first be ironed out. The DILG has also not lifted its hold order," Sr. Supt. Samuel Pagdilao, spokesperson of the Philippine National Police, said on the phone.

Implementing rules

Without these implementing rules, the PNP would only get confused about STL, he said.

"How will the PNP check who gives the authority (to operate) on an experimental basis? So anyone can take advantage of it. Are we going to check with PCSO or with the LGU?" Pagdilao said.

Besides these questions, the police also did not know—except what was written about in the papers—where the test runs would be held, he said.

What the police want to avoid is confusion on the ground, according to the PNP spokesperson.

He said the guidelines would first be submitted to the DILG, which would in turn provide a copy to PNP Director General Arturo Lomibao.

"The PNP chief will issue clear-cut guidelines for dissemination to all regional directors down to the stations," Pagdilao said.

Without these guidelines and with the hold order still in effect, the police will arrest those who will attempt to operate the STL, he said.

Pagdilao also said local laws dictated that anybody doing business in a town or city must first obtain a mayor's permit.

Operator to file civil case

The mayor also has operational supervision over the local police. The local chief executive has the power to employ and deploy the police, and therefore the actions of the Quezon City government, when it ordered the arrest of STL operators, was presumed to be regular, Pagdilao said.

Benchmark has agreed to stop its operations in the meantime, while it tries to get the necessary business and mayor's permits from City Hall, according to Bayobay.

He said Conrado Zabella, PCSO assistant general manager for lottery, had advised the company to cease operations while it still did not have the permits.

Bayobay said the company would lodge a civil case against the city government.

The lawyer protested the raids and arrests, saying Benchmark was only a "sales agent" of the PCSO, which is the principal STL operator.

"Our position is Benchmark is only an agent. It should be the PCSO, in its capacity as principal, that should secure the permit," he said.

Jojie Atienza said there was too much "political maneuvering" in the STL operations, but the company could not let it go since they had "invested too much already" in the venture.

Bayobay said the company had put in as much as P10 million in a cash bond for the STL.

He said the local government of Quezon City should "cooperate" with the national government concerning STL operations.

In Negros Oriental, STL was not welcome.

Valencia Mayor Rodolfo Gonzales, executive vice president of the League of Municipalities in the Philippines-Negros Oriental chapter, said the league and Gov. George Arnaiz were not in favor of the project.

"We (town mayors) will not endorse the small town lottery. The better thing to do is to strengthen the moral fiber of society," Gonzales said.

Arnaiz said he was strongly opposed to allowing STL to operate in the province. *With a report from Romy G. Amarado, PDI Visayas Bureau*

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70-year-old is festival's fastest tobacco roller

From page A1

Candon when she was 4 years old. She hasn't stopped since.

And to show that she remains hale and hearty, she bested six contestants in winning the 2nd Panagdubla, or Tobacco Rolling Contest, highlight of the Tobacco Festival here on Saturday.

She rolled five one-inch-diameter cigars in five minutes.

Her effort tied the output of Mely Fernan of Barangay Caterman, but organizers proclaimed Galanto the winner because her cigars were firmer.

Galanto said she had never been hospitalized for smoking.

Smokers are winners

In fact, she said, dragging on a homegrown leaf has helped cure her occasional attacks of stomach pains. This was on the advice of her late mother, she told the INQUIRER.

"My late mother told us to smoke (tobacco) when we experienced stomachaches," she said.

On Saturday, various competitions using tobacco, this city's premier cash crop, were featured in the festival.

"It is a way of showing that Candon is the country's biggest tobacco producer. The festival also helps promote the city as a tourism destination," said Mayor Allen Singson.

Among the winners were women in their 70s.

A team contest to produce a meter-long tobacco roll was won by the team from Barangay Salvador 1st, which included Marcela Abaya and Salvacion Soriano, both aged 79.

Their group won after its members puffed and produced smoke from their lighted tobacco roll.

"It was hard to produce smoke because of [the tobacco roll's] length," Abaya, who started puffing when she was in Grade 6, said.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, March 27, 2006
4th Week of Lent

1st Reading: Is 65:17-21
Gospel: John 4:43-54

When the two days were over, Jesus left for Galilee. Jesus himself said that no prophet is recognized in his own country. Yet the Galileans welcomed him when he arrived, because of all the things he had done in Jerusalem during the Festival and which they had seen. For they, too, had gone to the feast. Jesus went back to Cana of Galilee where he had changed the water into wine. At Capernaum there was an official whose son was ill, and when he heard that Jesus had come from Judea to Galilee, he went and asked him to come and heal his son, for he was at the point of death.

Jesus said, "Unless you see signs and wonders, you will not believe!" The official said, "Sir, come down before my child dies." And Jesus replied, "Go, your son is living."

The man had faith in the word that Jesus spoke to him and went his way. He was already going down the hilly road when his servants met him with this news, "Your son has recovered!" So he asked them at what hour the child had begun to recover and they said to him, "The fever left him yesterday in the afternoon about one o'clock." And the father realized that it was the time when Jesus told him, "Your son is living." And he became a believer, he and all his family.

Jesus performed this second miraculous sign when he returned from Judea to Galilee.

Commentary

God is always making something new upon the face of the earth. God is always renewing his covenant, restoring his people, bringing joy back into the hearts of those who call upon him. But there will be something unimaginable one day—we must wait and watch. Jesus is always trying to reveal that unimaginable holiness and awe to us, but even his own don't see it. He goes to Cana and Capernaum, making the rounds again and it is a royal official who approaches him, not his own people. Everyone wants signs and wonders, not truthfulness, faithfulness and obedience, but still in his patience and kindness, Jesus heals the child of the one who begs from him. Jesus serves the God of life always. Do we serve that same God of boundless life for all?

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‘Humane treatment for Erap’

By Christine O. Avendaño

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO IS FOR the “humane treatment” of former President Joseph Estrada, according to Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye.

“She’s all for the humane treatment of the former President but everything must be within the bounds of law,” Bunye said, explaining Ms Arroyo’s position on Estrada who is facing plunder charges before the Sandiganbayan.

Bunye made the statement on RMN radio when asked to comment on the claim of Leonardo de Vera, convenor of Equal Justice for All, that Estrada might not have to spend a day in prison even if he were convicted because of a two-year-old executive order issued by the President granting clemency to septuagenarians serving time.

But Bunye said he was not familiar with Executive Order No. 155 and told RMN radio he would need to check on this.

Still, he said, it was always the President’s belief that Estrada should be accorded “humane treatment.”

Likewise, Ms Arroyo was leaving it to the Sandiganbayan to decide Estrada’s plunder case.

“She is not interfering because she knows the Sandiganbayan is independent and should be free in assessing the evidence presented in the ongoing trial,” Bunye said.

He repeated his earlier call to all sectors not to speculate on the outcome of Estrada’s plunder trial.

“We believe the Sandiganbayan will decide based on the merits of the case and on the evidence presented to them,” Bunye said.

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[1] Walzem, R.L., C.J. Dillard, and J.B. German. Crit. Rev. Food & Sci & Nutr. 42:353, 2002. [2] Meister A. Cancer Res 1994;54(S):1969-1975

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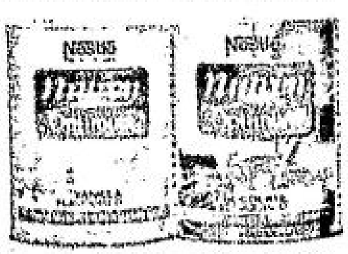

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Pinoys target Aussies libraries

THE PHILIPPINE consulate in Sydney has embarked on a project to promote the Philippines through Australia's libraries.

Called the "Read Philippines Project in Australia," the project aims to "encourage interest and awareness of Philippine cultural heritage by enhancing the existing collection of books and audio-visual materials on the Philippines in Australian libraries," the Department of Foreign Affairs said in a statement.

The consulate has partnered with the Blacktown City Libraries and the Philippine-Australian Society for Senior Citizens Inc. in the project.

Blacktown City, located 36 kilometers west of Sydney, is home to the largest concentration of Filipino residents in Australia.

Young Filipino-Australians, their friends and the community-at-large are the target audience of the project, Consul General Maria Theresa Lazaro said.

The project would make information on the Philippines "readily accessible to the Australian public," Lazaro added.

Under the project, Filipino community organizations would "adopt" a public library and donate educational books, videos and CD-ROMs that would provide "quality information" about the Philippines. *Nikko Dizon*

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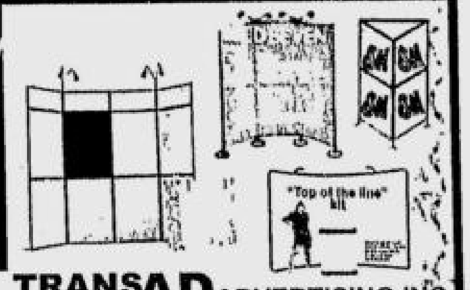

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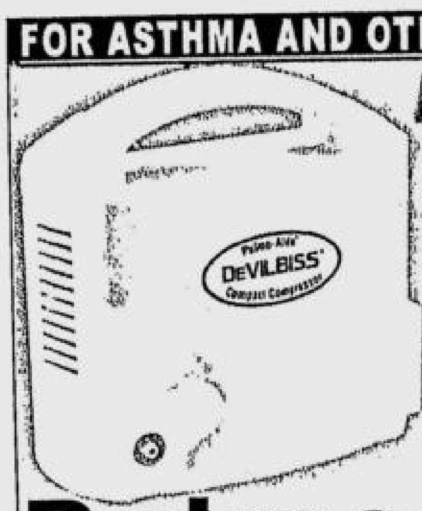

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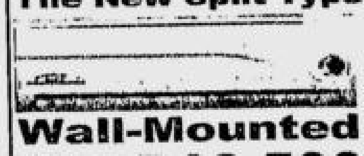

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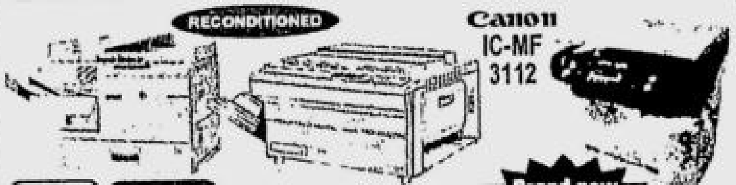

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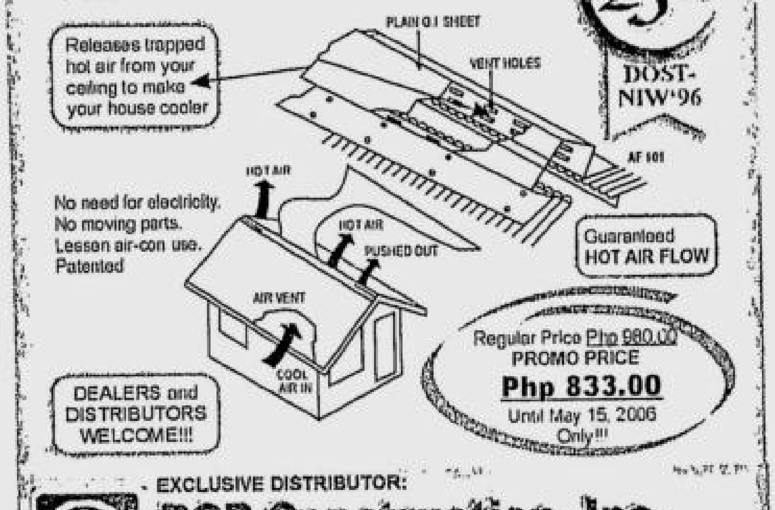

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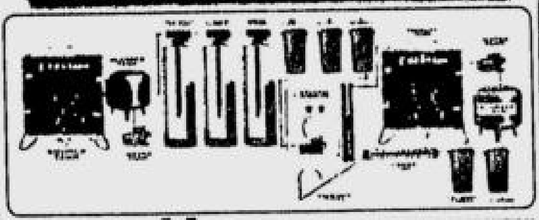

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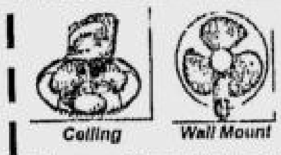

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Schools allowing abusive tutors to be shut

By Alcuin Papa

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (DepEd) has warned it would close down any public school found tolerating or promoting the use of corporal or cruel punishment against students.

In a statement, DepEd Assistant Secretary for Legal Affairs and spokesperson Camilo Montessa said Republic Act No. 7610, also known as the Anti-Child Abuse Act, provides for the closure of any school found guilty of tolerating or promoting child abuse on its premises.

Under the law, "all establishments and enterprises which promote or facilitate acts of abuse shall be immediately closed and their authority or license to operate cancelled…"

The warning was aired in the wake of a rash of incidents involving cruel punishment being heaped on erring students by their teachers.

Montessa said abusive teachers would be charged administratively and criminally and could face jail terms.

"The law is very clear about protecting our children from any abuse so we are reminding teachers and school officials about this," Montessa said.

He said that while the recent incidents "may seem to be isolated," the DepEd had received many "anecdotal reports" of abuse in the classroom "of varying degrees, including sexual abuse."

"We would like to send out the message that we have no tolerance for this," Montessa said.

He said that while DepEd Order No. 92 issued in 1992 allows teachers to impose "appropriate and reasonable disciplinary measures" in cases involving minor offenses, it does not permit the use of cruelty, abuse or unusual punishment.

Montessa appealed to teachers to treat their students as if they were their own children. "The students have been entrusted to us by their parents to look after and educate," he said.

Two weeks ago, a second grader at Silangan Elementary School in Bicutan, Taguig City, died after allegedly being forced to swallow pencil shavings by her teacher.

A teacher in a provincial school reportedly made some of her pupils undress in front of their classmates when they did not know the lesson.

Once a teacher uses coercion and abuse, he becomes incompetent to teach and nurture the students. "We are no longer contributing to their development. Then we have failed in our jobs," Montessa said.

Earlier, DepEd officer in charge Fe Hidalgo said the department would implement reforms in the recruitment of teachers in the wake of the reports of student abuse.

Montessa said there was a need for a "paradigm shift" among teachers.

"We have gotten used to the old traditional ways of punishing students. But in this day and age, we have found better and more effective ways of dealing with children other than coercion. We have to learn to change the way we treat our children," he said.

Anyone aware of incidents of student abuse may directly contact the Department of Education DTxT Action Center by texting 2622 (type DEPED FDBK <name> <message> and send to 2622) or by calling hotline number (02) 636-1663.

MILF says child soldiers not used for combat

By Nash B. Maulana
PDI Mindanao Bureau

COTABATO CITY—THE MORO Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) has finally admitted it had armed minors in its camps but refused to call them child soldiers.

Earlier, the International Labor Organization (ILO) denounced rebel groups in Central Mindanao for using children in their war against the government.

The ILO said recruiting children into the armed conflict was the worst form of child labor.

The report was carried by the INQUIRER last year.

The MILF said the armed children in their camps were not combatants and it was wrong to call them child soldiers.

"There were a few children who were seen carrying guns as tall as themselves, but this was never in accordance with the policy of the MILF," according to Mohagher Iqbal, MILF chief negotiator.

'Fight to survive'

Iqbal said the role of the armed children, or children of war as he called them, was purely "auxiliary" in nature and not for combat, "except when the whole MILF base or community is under attack, in which case all and sundry will have to fight to survive."

Iqbal cited the military assault on Camp Abubakar in 2000 as an example.

He said Abubakar was not a camp in the strictest sense because a civilian community lived there. Some civilians had firearms although they were not necessarily MILF members and their children sometimes carried guns, too.

In many Moro communities, guns are considered vital tools for survival, particularly where feuds abound.

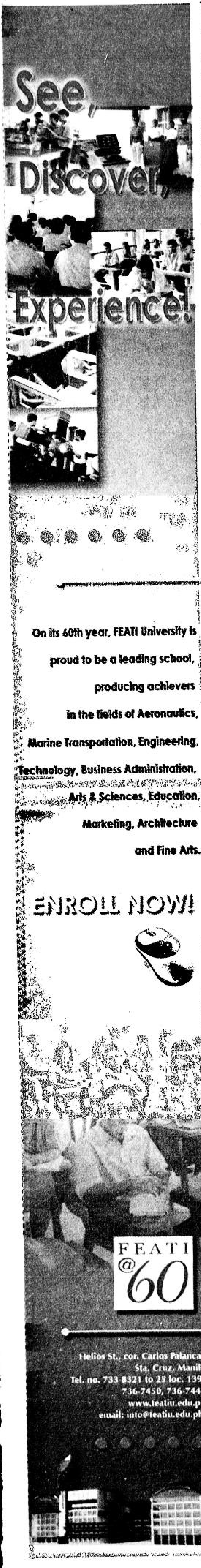
"Some onlookers have interpreted this as a conscription of minors. It is not—they are born to it and have learned to live up to it as a way of survival," Iqbal said.

'Rehabilitation'

Jun Mantawil, head of the MILF peace panel secretariat, said at an inter-faith forum here on children's rights that the rebel group was committed to the "rehabilitation and education of children of war."

Mantawil cited MILF policy that states: "The rightful place of children, being (at) tender ages, must be in schools to prepare them for the future either as leaders of the community or as good law-abiding and productive members."

He said the children attend *madaris* (Arabic schools) in MILF camps and, like kids everywhere, they love recess.



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Toxic waste spills into Lucena river

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LUCENA CITY—CHEMICAL WASTE FROM A soap factory located at the outskirts of this city has spilled into the Alitao River, causing serious water pollution that is affecting the lives of thousands of people who depend on the river, including an indigenous Aeta community.

Emilio Pilar, Philippine National Bank vice president for Southern Tagalog operations, said he first noticed the white and brownish foamy substance floating on the water Sunday morning.

He immediately contacted the environmentalist group Tanggol Kalikasan (TK) and reported the incident.

City environment and DENR-Environment Management Bureau officials and Lucena police rushed to the site of the spill.

About 50 Aeta families live beside the Alitao River which they regard as the source of their "life and existence." The river provides them with different varieties of fish and shrimp.

TK executive director Asis Perez said the owner of the soap factory would be liable under the Clean Water Act and Philippine Fisheries Code.

The spill was traced to the CDK Soap Industry located along the Lucena-Tayabas highway and owned by William King.

"This is one of the worst forms of aquatic pollution," Perez said.

The chemical waste has started to flow downstream to the Iyam River, one of the two main rivers flowing along both sides of the city towards Tayabas Bay.

King told police and government officials that his main cooking tank sustained a leak, which resulted in the flow of chemical waste flowing into the river.

"It was an accident. We were forced to suspend our operations to let the tank cool before we could conduct repair work," he said.

King said they used to put the hardened chemical waste in sacks, which they then dumped in the city landfill.

Perez, however, claimed King deliberately allowed the plant's waste to flow into the Alitao River.

"He could have prevented the spillage if only he had put a plug in the exit canal inside his plant. If he did that, he could have contained the spillage inside his plant and prevented the toxic flow towards the river," he pointed out.

Money continues to pour in for landslide victims

MORE THAN A MONTH AFTER THE TRAGIC landslide that buried an entire village in Southern Leyte, monetary donations from overseas continue to pour in, according to the Department of Foreign Affairs.

The donations came from Filipino-American communities as well as from foreign nationals.

A total of $78,021.79 (P4 million) was donated by various groups and individuals from the United States for the victims of the landslide in Guinsaugon, St. Bernard, Southern Leyte, Consul General Maria Rowena Sanchez of the Philippine Consulate in San Francisco said in her report to the DFA.

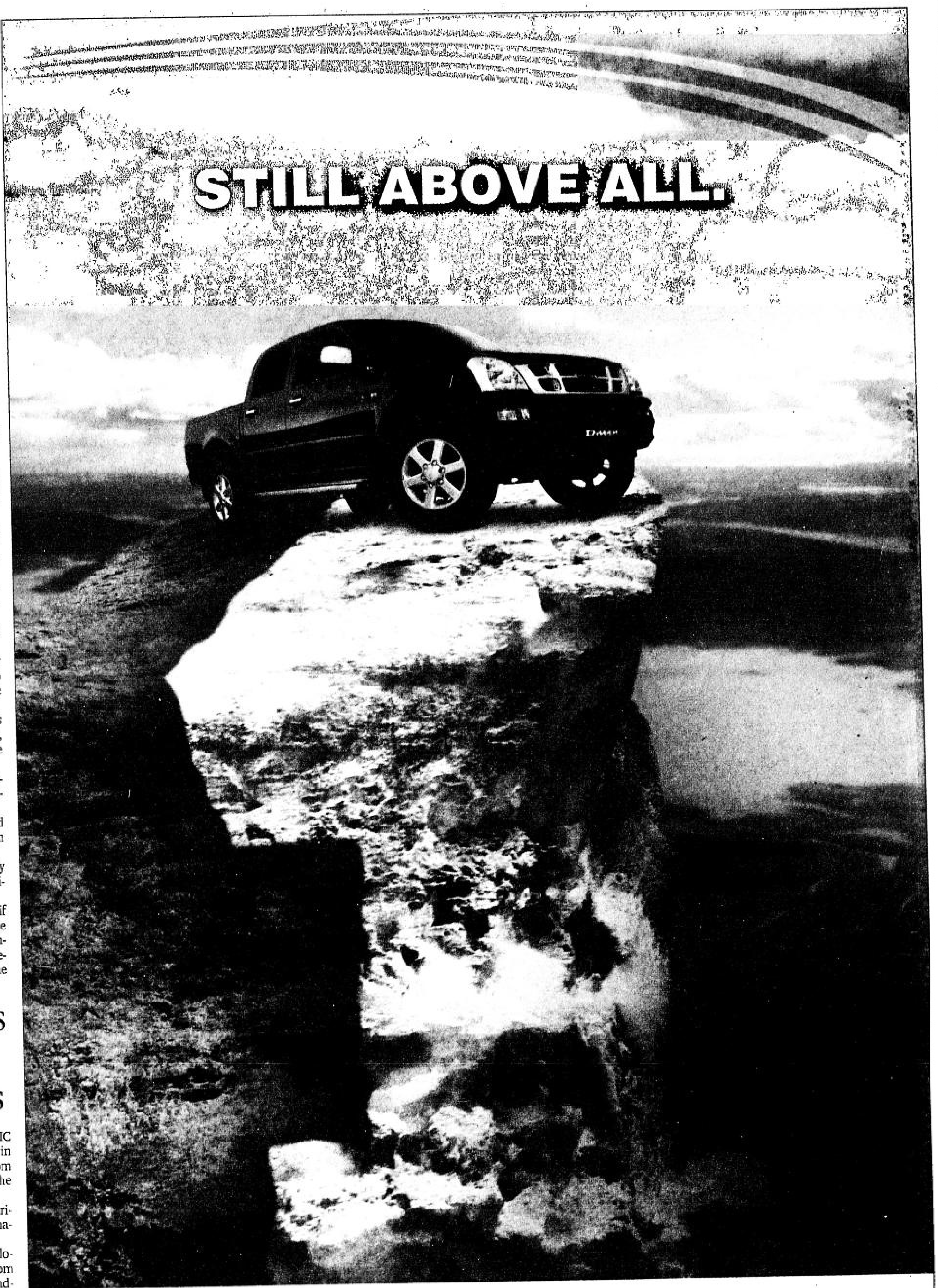
Several Filipino-American communities hosted fund-raising activities for the landslide victims, Sanchez said.

One event held on March 11 by Filipino-American groups raised some $10,000 (P511,630).

The proceeds would go directly to the American Red Cross, Sanchez said, quoting the Filipino event organizer.

An auction generated $13,810 (P706,561) while another event raised $20,000 (P1.02 million). The Ayala Foundation USA also received $2,731 (P139,726) in donations.

Sanchez, in a DFA statement, said the donations would be coursed to the victims through the National Disaster Coordinating Council. *Nikko Dizon*



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OPINION

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Betting on the fox

EDITORIAL

THERE MAY BE REASONABLE ARGUMENTS IN FAvor of the Arroyo administration's Small Town Lottery system, but none of them can override the central disqualifying factor: STL, potentially a billion-peso enterprise that is supposed to eradicate the illegal numbers game of *jueteng*, will be run by this administration.

That alone should give all of us pause.

Gambling has always been a fact of life in these islands; the multi-generational popularity of jueteng, to cite only one example, is proof that we are not averse to a little risk-taking. In fact, the appeal of jueteng is precisely the possibility of seeing one's small bet (say, a peso) earn big returns (say, a few thousand). Never mind if many bettors already know that the results are manipulated, that in fact in many places no actual jueteng draw is held; they are simply playing the odds.

But precisely because gambling is almost an integral part of our culture, the usual questions of morality arise with greater force. Should the authorities—the mayor or the chief of police, the bishop or the prominent local businessman—encourage a tradition that teaches us to depend on luck, that reinforces the stereotypes of indolence? The list of questions is practically endless. The point is, the place of gambling in our culture is eminently a moral issue. It should not be placed in the hands of the amoral.

Unfortunately for Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno, his reputation for being a matchless political operative, regardless of who he works for, precedes him. Till now, allegations of his involvement in special election operations for Fidel Ramos in 1992, Joseph Estrada in 1998, and President Macapagal-Arroyo in 2004 continue to hound him. As Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. said piquantly, Puno's appointment as STL overseer was "like assigning a fox to guard the chicken coop."

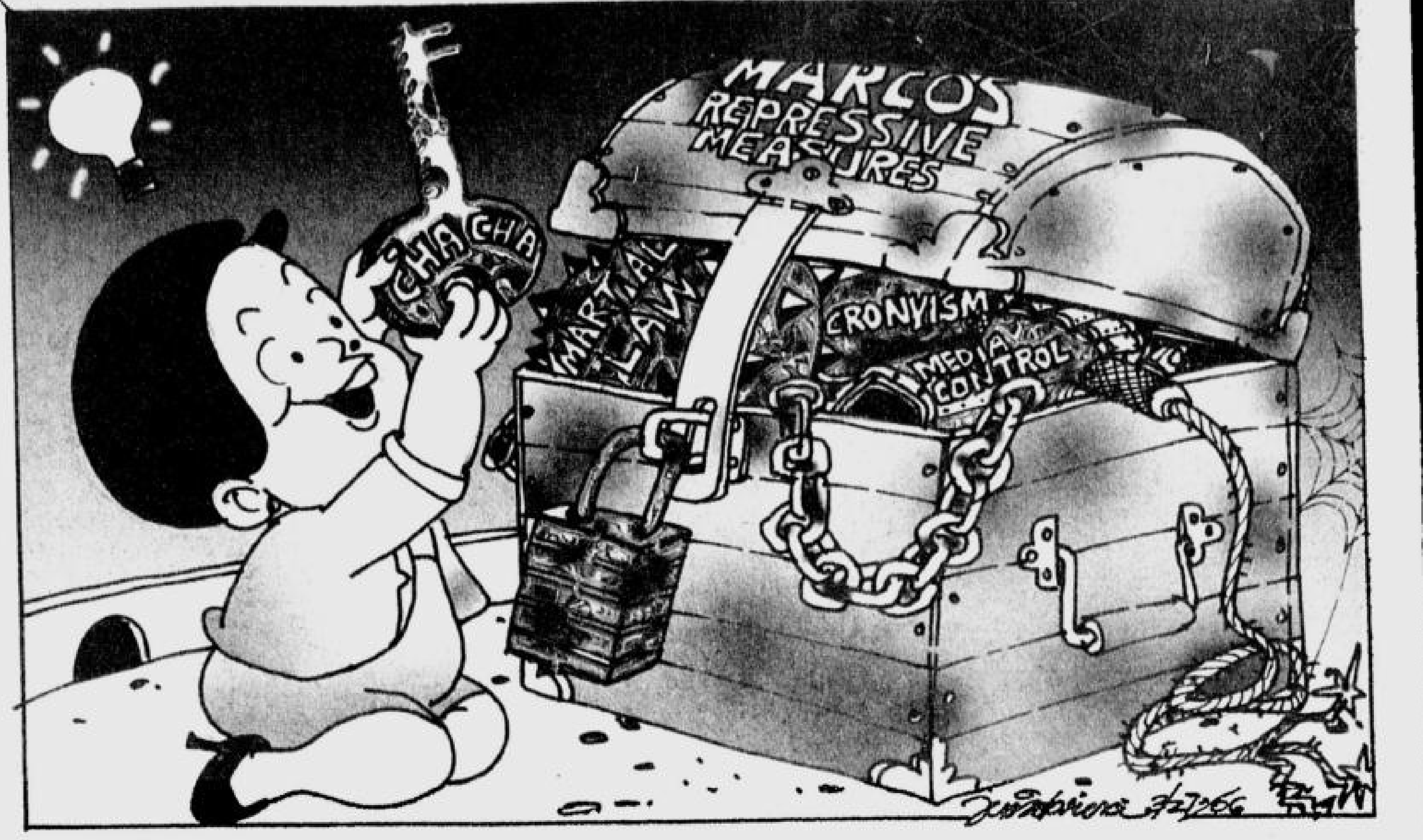
To many, Puno has not yet met a political limitation he can't finesse; consider his refusal to vacate his congressional post while waiting to be confirmed by the Commission on Appointments as interior secretary. That helps explain why Pimentel thinks the STL will have political uses: It "may be a source of funds that may not be strictly accountable for activities of the administration people." Or why Sen. Panfilo Lacson, the former national police chief who is not unaware of the political influence of jueteng, thinks that Puno's appointment is related to the administration drive to change the Constitution. "The connection is too glaring to ignore." Lacson adds, for good measure: "Even his illegal assumption as interior secretary without being confirmed by the Commission on Appointments, in clear violation of the Constitution, is not without motive."

Puno's own boss is suffering from similar do-the-ends-justify-the-means issues. President Arroyo has famously admitted to a "lapse in judgment" in calling an election official during the 2004 canvassing, ostensibly to "protect her vote." But what is a moral choice, if not a deliberate act of judgment?

Many of her official decisions since that admission have been designed to ensure her political survival even as her crisis of legitimacy rages, but Proclamation 1017, Executive Order 464, the calibrated preemptive response policy—all these have come at a high cost: she has lost the moral high ground her million-vote mandate had given her.

To all intents and purposes, STL is legalized jueteng, complete with that illegal game's cast of "cabos" and "cobradores." To embark on such a morally fraught project, without so much as a consensus in Congress or consultation with the public, is amoral, opportunistic politics at its basest. Anti-jueteng Archbishop Oscar Cruz may turn out to be right: "President Macapagal-Arroyo will go down in history as the only president to take jueteng to the mainstream."

Estrada, the last one who tried to do that, found himself out of a job when trusted allies turned on each other, and ultimately on him, too. Now Ms Arroyo seeks to do Estrada one better. She has managed to humiliate her anti-jueteng czar, Mayor Edward Hagedorn, the man behind the STL strategy, in favor of Puno. Hagedorn has put on a brave face, even making the right noises: With Puno in charge, he said, STL will be "in safe and reliable hands." Now that's what you call raising the ante.



Waste of time, money and energy

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

IT IS A WELL-ESTABLISHED PRINCIPLE OF law that in interpreting provisions of the Constitution, we must look into the intent of the framers of the Charter and not rely on the letter of the law alone. There is current debate on the provision relative to the "people's initiative" as a mode of amending the Constitution—aside from the Constitutional Convention or the Constituent Assembly.

The Constitution provides that for a "people's initiative" to prosper, a petition for amendment must have the signatures of at least 12 percent of the total number of registered voters in the whole country and at least 3 percent of every congressional district. The administration, through the Department of the Interior and Local Government, has ordered barangay officials to call their constituents to barangay assemblies for the purpose of getting them to sign the petition for Charter change. According to the thinking of administration officials, this exercise follows the letter of the law on people's initiative. I disagree.

The people's initiative—like the constitutional provision on recall, by which a given number of voters of a given area, through a petition, can recall any of their elected executives and call for a new election—was designed by the framers of the 1987 Constitution to institutionalize "people power," which we all know ousted a dictator.

Corazon Aquino, the woman who succeeded Ferdinand Marcos, subsequently created the Constitutional Commission to replace the 1972 Charter. The intent was to give the people more power to chart their destiny and avoid a repeat of the Marcos dictatorship, which trampled on the rights of the people.

In both constitutional provisions, the operative word is "initiative," which the dictionary defines as "the action of taking the first step or move; responsibility for beginning or originating." Another operative word is "people." Thus, the first step, the "initiative," must be taken by the "people," and not by the government. What is now happening is not a spontaneous act of barangay residents but a calculated move of the national government to herd the former and get their signatures on a petition the contents of which they don't even fully understand. It is the national government again dictating to the people. It is the government, not the people, taking the initiative for Charter change. Indeed, it is no different from the ploy of the Marcos dictatorship in gathering citizens and then asking them who had not eaten yet; as they raised their hands, the government would claim that whatever it was that had been put to a vote had been approved by the people.

Thus, the current campaign of the DILG to gather signatures in barangay assemblies is a violation of the spirit of the Constitution. Maybe, it follows the letter of the law but definitely not the spirit of the law.

Other reasons why the current efforts to gather signatures is a waste of time, money, and energy have already been explained by Fr. Joaquin Bernas, S.J., constitutionalist, law dean of Ateneo, member of the commission that wrote the 1987 Constitution—and the newest "guru of destabilization," in the words of Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez.

Bernas pointed out that the people's initiative provision in the Constitution requires an enabling law before it can be implemented (as the Supreme Court ruled in a case involving the first attempt at people's initiative); and "even if there was (an enabling law), you can use a people's initiative (only) to make specific changes to the Constitution"—not to revise the whole Constitution or change the form of government, as the present Cha-cha proponents want to do. Thus, the latest "people's initiative" is already dead in the water before it can even take off.

* * *

What makes *jueteng* illegal during the administration of President Estrada but not today, during the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo who is accused of having stolen the presidency from the former? Estrada is being tried for plunder, allegedly for accepting millions of pesos of jueteng money from gambling lords and depositing them in a bank in the name of the Muslim Youth Foundation, the purpose of which was to send bright Muslim youths to schools abroad under a scholarship program. Note that Erap is not accused of pocketing the money which up to now remains intact in a bank. It is now government money. What's wrong with that, a reporter asked at a news forum.

On the other hand, the Arroyo administration is currently pushing, through the Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, the Small Town Lottery (STL), even in cities and municipalities that don't want it (such as Quezon City). STL is the same old jueteng with a different name. In the same forum, Puerto Princesa Mayor Edward Hagedorn—who proposed the STL as a way of giving displaced jueteng workers alternative jobs—admitted that STL is the same dog with a new collar. So what made it bad during Estrada's presidency (so bad that Erap might have to go to prison for life or be executed by lethal injection for it) but now so good, such that the Arroyo administration is promoting it?

And what made the jueteng lords so bad during Estrada's time such that they were being denounced and arrested and jailed (if caught), but now so good such that they are being given franchises by the PCSO to operate the STLs? And why is it that the Church and the bishops and priests who were so vocal against jueteng during Estrada's time are now so silent about it?

Logic 101

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

THERE ARE A COUPLE OF ARGUMENTS CURrently being used to advance Charter change. One is that the folk in the countryside are not interested in the political obsessions of imperial Manila but are concerned only with *kabuhayan*, or how to get by. Those concerns are addressed by Charter change. The other is that the folk in the country generally, the "silent majority," do not particularly care about matters of morality, they care only about matters of survival; they do not care about matters of conscience, they care only about matters of stomach. That, too, is addressed by Charter change.

Both arguments, like Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo herself, are fake. Both arguments, like Virgilio Garcillano, lie.

The first I've heard repeatedly on TV and in forums. It's the brainchild of Ronnie Puno, a veteran of martial law and one of the single biggest causes of this country slinking back to it. The idea, in fact, is a throwback to martial law. Marcos, too, used to use the local officials, notably the barangay officials (the barangay was his invention), to show that he had the support of the *masa*, or the "silent majority," in the countryside as opposed to a cantankerous few in Metro Manila. Puno is in charge of manufacturing the clamor for Charter change, one presumably welling up from the bowels of the earth. "Sigaw ng Bayan, Charter Change!" their streamers scream. GMA and her lieutenants do have something in common with Marcos: They can lie through their teeth.

The argument is easily debunked. To begin with, you have the Pulse Asia survey that says the real "*sigaw ng bayan*," or cry of the people is not Charter change but "*Alis dyan!*" The latter phrase was the one Diosdado Macapagal's opponents used on him in the 1965 elections to lethal effect. One is tempted to say, "like father, like daughter," but the father at least won a presidential election before the people told him, "*Alis dyan!*" The daughter has yet to win one.

The Pulse Asia survey didn't just cover Metro Manila, it covered the entire country. It said 65 percent of Filipinos want GMA out. You can't get a louder "*sigaw ng bayan*" than that, though we have a local saying that the hardest person to wake up is the one pretending to be asleep. The hardest person to deafen is the one pretending to be deaf. The notion that the folk in the countryside do not share the Metro Manilans' detestation of the person who currently occupies the Palace by the Pasig and gives off a more unpleasant odor than the river is merely asserted, it is not proven. I go out of Metro Manila, too, to talk to various audiences in the provinces, and I can say with even more conviction—and credibility—that that is not the case. The folk in the countryside are just as incensed by the fact that their votes for Fernando Poe Jr. were not counted as the folk of Metro Manila are that their votes for Raul Roco, Panfilo Lacson and Eddie Villanueva were not.

More than this, the argument that the folk of the countryside do not share Metro Manila's political concerns refutes the notion of Charter change by itself. It is a self-contradiction. If the folk of the countryside are far too unsophisticated or driven only by need to worry about Metro Manila's political preoccupations, why on earth, or hell—or whatever place Puno got his idea from—would they turn their thoughts to, of all things, Charter change? It defies credulity altogether, though I doubt that these guys even think about credulity anymore. Removing a usurper is concrete and is near to the gut or heart of the ordinary Filipino. Changing a charter is an abstraction and is near only to the gall and pocket of the extraordinary *trapo*. A dirt-poor farmer in the wilds of Mindanao has no imagination to see the right and wrong of stealing the vote but has the imagination to see merit or demerit of constitutional change?

The second argument merely extends a notion we've been hearing these past months, namely, "let's move on, let's stop thinking about politics (or morality) and think about the economy." The second argument does not say that the folk of the countryside are clamoring for Charter change, it says Charter change will be good for them as it will address their issues of the stomach.

That is a vicious idea. That is in fact the authoritarian argument, the very same one used by Marcos. What it boils down to is: Let's forget about freedom, let's mind only bread. Let's forget about democracy, let's mind only the economy. Let's forget about (clean) elections, let's mind only survival. Well, as martial law proved beyond a shadow of doubt, people who are willing to give up free choice for survival, democracy for material gain, freedom for bread, end up getting neither. Freedom is not irrelevant to progress, it is the only guarantee of it. Morality is not an impediment to the economy, it is the driving force of it.

You do not have to exert yourself to see why it's Logic 101. The notion that we can afford to forget who really won the last elections and concentrate only on economic recovery is absolutely idiotic. It presumes that someone who has no compunction about stealing the people's votes will balk at stealing the people's money. It presumes that someone who has no compunction about stealing the nation's hopes will balk at stealing the nation's future. It presumes that someone who has no compunction about perverting all of society's institutions to keep power for herself will use all the power she has seized to serve the people. You believe that, you won't qualify as a "positive thinker," you'll qualify as a potential inmate of Mandaluyong's famous institution. Might as well believe Garci never left his home, people just didn't see him.

Change the Charter? Nope, just change the usurper. Cheaper, faster, better.

Snap election talk

SOUNDING BOARD

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

WHAT WOULD IT TAKE TO HAVE PRESIDENTIAL elections before 2010? This is a question frequently asked these days. The simple answer, of course, is that presidential elections before 2010 can be legally held only if the Offices of the President and the Vice President become permanently vacant.

And how can that happen? Again the simple answer—but not easily realizable—is that the two offices can become permanently vacant if both the President and Vice President die, or resign, or are removed by impeachment, or become permanently disabled. That is what the Constitution says.

But can we not have a presidential election if only the Office of the President becomes vacant? Again the simple answer is that if the President dies, or resigns, or is removed by impeachment, or becomes permanently incapacitated, the Vice President automatically becomes President. And there will be no vice-presidential election in such circumstance because the new Vice President will be chosen by the new President from either the Senate or the House of Representatives, subject to confirmation by Congress. Recall that this was how Teofisto Guingona became Vice President.

My interlocutor becomes persistent and asks: But did we not have an election only for President in 1986, as called by President Marcos? True, many strange things happened under the Marcos presidency. But that one was not so strange. The Supreme Court's explanation was that, at that time, there was no sitting Vice President. It was said that President Marcos was allergic to vice presidents and the law then stated that the Vice President-elect could not assume office until the end of Marcos' term.

The next question is: But how could there be a presidential election when President Marcos was still in office and the end of his term was still a long time coming? Again the Supreme Court had an explanation for that: When Marcos called for a special election while he was still President, the call was equivalent to a conditional resignation. He would be considered resigned if he lost. (So now we see that conditional resignation is possible.) But in the case of Marcos, it became unnecessary because of Edsa I. (In the case of President Estrada it was called "constructive" resignation.)

That, however, is not the end of the search for a constitutional way of vacating the Office of the President. Just as the people, through their ratification of the Constitution, fixed the term of the President, so also, in the exercise of their sovereign authority, the people can unfix the term through a constitutional amendment.

As a matter of fact, I have been shown a bullet amendment which seeks to declare the Offices of the President and the Vice President vacant. For good measure, an accompanying amendment seeks to reorganize the Comelec. If these amendments are proposed to the people and are ratified by them, then we can have presidential elections before 2010. Fat chance, however, that this will happen.

Having exhausted all constitutional avenues, my interlocutor asks whether extra-constitutional measures are possible. Again the simple answer is that we did it in 1986. But trying to duplicate 1986 is not so simple. The fundamental fact is that revolutions, whether armed or peaceful, become legitimate only when they attain permanent success. There have been attempts since 1986, but none has succeeded.

Which brings us to initiative and referendum. We are getting conflicting reports about the meetings of barangay councils that were supposed to take place last Saturday. (The remarks made yesterday by the justice secretary about this writer were meant to obfuscate, not clarify.) Some say that the meetings were nothing more than an educational exercise about constitutional amendments. Others say that they were called for the collection of signatures, whether freely given or bought, as a prelude to initiative and referendum to amend the Constitution.

It must be widely known by now, however, (even by the justice secretary), that initiative and referendum for amending the Constitution cannot take place without an enabling law. The Supreme Court has already said that there is as yet no such enabling law. Neither am I aware of any serious move to pass one in Congress. But even if there were an enabling law, we can be sure that the current barangay movement is not being mobilized for the purpose of declaring the presidency vacant! The same people who are orchestrating the movement very likely want President Macapagal-Arroyo to stay as head honcho until 2010. Or even for life!

Would it be possible, however, to resurrect the enabling law which the Supreme Court declared insufficient several years ago? After all, does not the Supreme Court on occasion change its mind? Of course, it does; but I don't think that it is possible for a bill long dead, and even buried, to be resurrected. A new bill has to be crafted.

But even if the new bill is of the same tenor as the one already rejected by the Court, its passing muster before the current Court is not impossible. The rejection several years ago by the Davide Court was not unanimous. And even if it had been unanimous, the Court, whose composition has changed since then, may now have a different way of looking at things. Several years ago, a replacement of only two justices resulted in the reversal of an earlier decision.

So, are we going to have presidential elections before 2010?

Red hat for a son of Mindanao

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Antonio J. Montalvan II

MANILA IS BLESSED TO HAVE SUCH A MAN IN its service. I hope the people of Manila will come to realize how blessed they are because of him. Even as I praise Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales, I am aware that there are those who have stereotyped the Office of the Archbishop of Manila as something that can only be filled by the likes of the late Jaime Cardinal Sin. In truth, the world is full of many other possibilities, and Cardinal Rosales is one of the best of those possibilities Manila can ever have.

Let the people of Mindanao speak of Cardinal Rosales, who spent the best years of his apostleship among the people of Bukidnon. As the prelate donned the red biretta in Rome, formally assuming his ministry as a cardinal, the people of Malaybalay had only happy reminiscences of the man who once lived with them, sharing their pain and joy.

More than 20 years ago, in July 1985, Ray Rodriguez was a young civil engineer fresh out of the University of Santo Tomas. Together with a group of seven Catholic lay workers, including two couples and their children, they set out for faraway Mindanao, leaving behind them the fast-paced life of cosmopolitan Manila. Their destination was bucolic Malaybalay. They had decided to leave Manila to answer the call of then Bishop Rosales for lay volunteers to work in his mountain diocese.

Out of that mission was born a fast-growing lay community, based in Malaybalay and known as the Buhing Pulong (the Visayan term for "Living Word"). Bishop Rosales, of course, is no longer in Bukidnon but the community that he inspired lives on. Today, Buhing Pulong has about 400 active members. In a sense, the community reflects the character of the man, whose pastoral initiatives in the area remain mostly alive and flourishing. Among these is, the bishop's apostolate for the integrity of creation, for which he earned his spur as the "Green Bishop" and where he met his crucible.

Bukidnon's thick rainforests had become a magnet for rampant illegal and legalized logging. Rosales saw for himself the province's deteriorating natural environment, a problem that was driving farmers even deeper into marginal existence. The bishop also saw that working for the preservation of the forests meant being at loggerheads with the powers-that-be behind rampant logging. But still he took up the "green" cause and pushed his advocacy one step further. He asked the government to deputize his priests as forest guards and clothe them with the authority to arrest illegal loggers.

One of the deputized priests, Fr. Nery Satur, crossed the path of illegal loggers and was brutally murdered while riding his motorcycle on the way to minister a far-flung barrio. To this day, the people of Bukidnon have not forgotten the bloody incident. To this day, still etched in their memories is an intensely angry Bishop Rosales reacting to the murder, becoming even more fearless in his defense of the environment. He also immortalized that struggle by writing a book on Father Satur who is today hailed as the Philippines' Chico Mendes, the martyr of the Amazon who was gunned down in defense of Brazil's rainforests.

The lay volunteers from Manila who went to Malaybalay on Bishop Rosales' invitation left 22 years later. But they continue to pursue their mission elsewhere in Manila and Southeast Asia—all of them, except Rodriguez.

In 1985, Rodriguez was to attend a Catholic youth conference in Cotabato, for which reason he had to go to the bishop's residence for a briefing with the bishop himself. There he met Madelyn Agustin who was also a delegate to the conference. Three years later, they were married. It was the bishop who officiated at the wedding.

Of the many things that Rodriguez recalls of the bishop, there is one that probably spotlights Bishop Rosales' style of governance, a quality that, in fact, he has brought with him to Manila. "He was rarely seen at the cathedral because he was always ministering to far-flung barangays and *sitios*, usually with Bukidnon's indigenous people, the *lumads*," Rodriguez narrates.

By this account, one can discern the spirit behind the bishop's pet project as archbishop of Manila—the Pondo ng Pinoy—and his insistence that poverty, not politics, is the country's No. 1 problem. He has been in touch with Manila's poor. He knows what he is talking about. Manila is going to have a cardinal-archbishop with a more situated sense of what people power means in today's reality.

Many will be disconcerted with this observation. There are those who expect him to be in the mold of the late media-savvy Cardinal Sin. Politicians, not excluding the ones from Malacañang, would probably make a beeline for Villa San Miguel once he's back from Rome. What they do not know is Cardinal Rosales is his own man who prefers to work quietly sans the glare of media lights and the false pretenses of politicians.

The Malaybalay-based Rodriguez, together with the other members of the 1985 mission team, recently paid the cardinal a visit. There, at the *arzobispado* in Intramuros, Cardinal Rosales gave them his full three hours, talking about old times in Malaybalay, punctuating his conversations in fluent *Binisaya*, sharing jokes with his old friends, whose names and those of their kids, he still remembers.

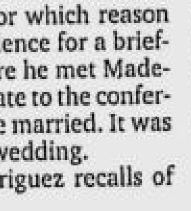
We live in times when the virtue of humility and the primacy of spirituality no longer have a place in our hierarchy of values. Perhaps, it is only fitting that a man like Cardinal Rosales should come into this moment of Manila's history and help play out the city's role in the life of our nation.

Manila, which thinks it has all the answers to our national problems, needs to be humbled.

* * *

Comments to monta@cu-cdo.edu.ph

Rule of the lawless



THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

LET US STOP FOOLING AROUND WITH "THE rule of law" that relies on the undemocratic assumption that the public is incapable of appreciating—much less defending—the law, or that only supporters of the administration stand by the law.

When Ma. Romela Mosqueda-Bengzon says "We can't be held hostage by a few in the Senate," what does she really mean? She's actually saying that she and others like her refuse to be "held hostage" by the Constitution, which requires both chambers of the legislature to work out constitutional change. In the same manner that they are saying respect the way in which the House handled the impeachment process, they must respect the way the Senate is resisting the "constitutional desires" of the President and the House— because that is how the Constitution designed things to work. Who is against the rule of law in this instance?

Of course, as citizens, we can always disagree. We can express our political views outside the formal channels. That is people power. Except that the administration and its allies are the first to say people power is dead.

You look at places—as one reader from Bicol reminded me—such as provinces like Bulacan, Oriental Negros, Bohol and Nueva Vizcaya; cities like Naga, Tuguegarao, Vigan; towns like Concepcion (Iloilo), Upi (Maguindanao) and E.B. Magalona (Negros Occidental), and you can easily see where lies the future of the country. These places, the same reader pointed out, "have good, experienced leaders (who) will put GMA to shame if accomplishments and commitment to sensible administration (are) discussed. It's quite ironic that they are marginalized under our Manila-centric media and politics."

But how can public attention be focused on places moving forward when the national government's solution to the political crisis—on which most of the country's regions have an opinion unfavorable to the President—is to revive the old Marcos-era script of short-circuiting the constitutional system?

This is why the question of the President's legitimacy is like the cork in the bottle. And this is why the political apparatus assisting the President are like the wires and foil that help keep the cork firmly in place. And while that cork is in place, the bubbly can't gush out, and we will be unable to move on and really progress.

The interior secretary has lent his logistical skills to the people's "spontaneous" manifestations of enthusiasm for constitutional change—made suddenly visible, over the weekend, with budgets for barangay "assistance," on sheets prepared in triplicate forms with lots of fine prints. A campaign team is barnstorming the country to push the party line.

The justice secretary wrote the Speaker, assuring that it is perfectly legal for government officials to campaign for Charter change. Anyone who disagrees is a "destabilizer."

The House of Representatives has a third of its members on their third and final terms, which means they would have to find other jobs come 2007. The remaining two-thirds run the risk of being voted out of office for toeing the party line instead of promoting their constituents' wish to see the impeachment process run its full course. Why risk losing a job just when it's getting to be more and more enjoyable? (Ask them what it would take the House to muster a quorum so it could do its business. Ask them why neither they nor the senators will reconsider the abusive system of congressional allowances, which were invented in 1945 as a way of getting around the limits on their salaries. And ask them why their development funds simply aren't given over to the provinces which should know best how to spend them.)

The majority of governors have met with the President and received marching orders to finish everything by July. They'd appreciate a free extra term without having to seek the people's vote for a fresh mandate. The President would appreciate not having to be bothered with another impeachment or not being a lame duck in 2007 when her endorsement would be a political kiss of death for candidates.

That is why what is being proposed will only benefit those proposing it. It is an old script that would build a new constitutional order on the quicksand of a desperate wish for a new lease on life—for a political class that should have given way to a new one 34 years ago when Ferdinand Marcos successfully established a government of, by, and for the *trapos* (not people).

Have any doubts? The administration's draft grants the new parliament the discretion as to when to schedule the next elections. You can be certain that date will be chosen on the basis of surveys showing that the dangers of a public backlash against the self-serving nature of the amendments have passed. As the President is, so is her legislature: afraid of the people.

And yet—if we were to have an epidemic of sacrifice—by which our officials, from the President on down, would vow to devote all their resources to a new and imaginative restructuring of our country; and that with a new Constitution, none of them would serve in the new government; I am sure the country would overwhelmingly approve whatever they would propose.

Not only that, such a startling surrender of ambition and self-interest would also lead to a massive rejection of those who are currently in the opposition. But this could result in a genuine change in our country's leadership—something that neither the administration nor the opposition really wants. Still, were she to propose this, the President would be a heroine, and she would find herself at the head of a great and unifying, cause.

Let the old order self-destruct gloriously.

* * *

Comments welcome at www.quezon.ph/blog

Teachers for excellence

COMMENTARY

Evelyn Mejillano, HSD

WHEN CLASSES OPEN IN JUNE, WE WILL HAVE ABOUT 18 million students enrolled in our public schools. Along with their parents, they hope that the education they get, will help them eventually break the crippling chains of poverty.

Unfortunately, the kind of education they get will not give them mastery of the basic knowledge and skills expected of them. Studies have shown that only six out of 100 Grade 6 pupils are ready for high school (Kaakbay-CDI) and 98 percent of high school seniors fail to meet the 75-percent norm in the National Achievement Test. (R.A. Ronda)

It has been argued that "pupils (are) only good as their teachers. These teachers leave it up to the next teacher to remedy the problem of students who can't read (or) write."

These situations are compounded by the attitude of the community where teachers are looked upon as "teachers *lang*." Teachers themselves say, "*Nag*-teacher *na lang ako kasi hindi ako kasing galing ni ate o kuya* (I chose to be just a teacher because I was not as bright as my siblings)."

It makes me sad to hear that. Many teachers today have low self-esteem. They tend to forget the key role they play in nation-building and that every lawyer, doctor, engineer, businessman and almost all the adults in the community went to the nearby elementary school. These successful men and women were students once, and surely they had teachers who conscientiously molded their minds, hearts and spirits. In that sense, teachers help shape the nation's future. I recall that when I was just a new teacher, people in my community called the older teachers, "*maestra*" as a sign of honor and respect.

Given the current realities in Philippine education, there clearly is an urgent need to develop excellent teachers. We need to improve the quality of our teachers. We also need to reassess our certification and recruitment procedures as well as the systems we use in managing and supervising our teachers. Equally important, we need to have a compensation and incentives program that does justice to the teaching profession. Dr. Onofre Pagsanghan, the quintessential teacher, recently said, "I know of no other profession apart from teaching that gives so much for so little."

This also means improving the way we train our "teachers at the pre-service stage"—meaning, aspiring teachers still pursuing a degree in education in one of our teacher education institutions (TEI), that is, any college or university that offers degrees in education.

The Commission on Higher Education recently issued Memorandum Order No. 30 s. 2004, which calls for a review of the teacher-training curriculum. Many factors triggered this memo: the Revised Basic Education Curriculum of 2002 and the changing global standards of teaching competence. Apart from these, the CHED saw that the consistently poor assessment of graduates from our TEIs needed to be seriously addressed.

A facilitator of a review class for a licensure examination for teachers once told me that out of her 300 reviewees only two passed the examination.

It is hoped that with an improved curriculum, the TEIs will be able to develop teachers with a new range of teaching-learning skills; not only that, teachers who are creative and innovative, and willing and capable to continue learning to fulfill their mission as teachers. These standards should be communicated to the TEI faculty, students, parents and other stakeholders. "*Hindi puwede ang puwede na.*" Teacher excellence has a direct bearing on the student's learning and ultimate entry into society as a good citizen. Mediocrity, therefore, has no place in our schools.

Undertaking relevant systemic reform for teacher development will definitely yield immeasurable benefit for generations of students. Teachers must realize that they "build towers of their students who will make the future of many nations." Social scientist John Schaar was addressing teachers when he said: "The future is not some place we're going but one we are creating. The paths are not to be found but made, and the process of making them change both the makers and the destination."

The Mentoring the Mentors program of the Foundation for Worldwide People Power (FWWPP) has a component designed specifically for TEI faculty. We have been implementing this in collaboration with the Philippine Association for Teacher Education (Pafte), mostly in the Visayas and Mindanao. We are calling on the TEIs and CHED regional offices in Luzon to join our advocacy in making teacher-educators the mentors with a genuine concern for their student-teachers. Our aim is to develop teachers who are self-motivated, empowered by critical thinking, committed and proud to be teachers, nationalistic and socially involved, and with a deep sense of spirituality, integrity and professionalism.

To measure the changes in the behavior of those who have participated in our "mentoring" programs from 2003 to 2004, the FWWPP commissioned the Ateneo Center for Organization Research and Development (CORD) to make a social impact assessment. The ratings of trained teachers were compared to those of the non-trained teachers. Significant, specific behavior changes among the trained teachers were noted. The details of this research may be obtained from execdir@fwwpp.org.

I should also mention here the in-service program for UP Diliman faculty, which I helped design and implement in the past 10 years. The term "in-service" refers to teachers who already have items and teaching loads in public or private schools. The program is simply called Teaching Effectiveness Course (TEC). It is a five-day program for interested faculty who want to upgrade their teaching competencies. The goal is the pedagogical shift from traditional teaching to active teaching and use of instructional technology, including effective instructional designs in teaching different subjects to small or large classes. The program is offered during semestral break and summer, and is open to junior and senior faculty members.

Several things—like a pleasant school environment, adequate textbooks, workbooks and other instructional materials—influence the learning process. However, the teacher's overall performance has the largest and longest impact on student learning. The influence of a teacher on the student is forever. The teachers are the wind beneath students' wings.

Evelyn Mejillano, an educator for 45 years, is the national coordinator for FWWPP's Mentoring the Mentors program. She earned her BS and MA education degrees from the University of the Philippines, and her doctorate degree in Health Science from Indiana University (United States), where she taught graduate courses in 1988 and 1989. She can be contacted through her e-mail address at execdir@fwwpp.org.

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

Last two minutes

IF MY FAVORITE COLUMNIST CONRAD DE Quiros would allow me, I'd like to borrow a phrase he popularized: "The last two minutes of the game."

The very critical situation the country is in right now could be likened to a basketball game—with Congress and the executive branch (whose star player is Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo) as the opposing teams.

It is very obvious that the congressional team is at a big disadvantage. Despite the violations of the rules of the game by the executive team—Proclamation 1017, EO 464 and CPR (calibrated preemptive response), to name a few—the referee (the Supreme Court), refuses to make the calls.

Moreover, when 10 (the Hyatt 10, perhaps, conscience-stricken) of the original players of the executive department quit the team, they were replaced by rough players in the persons of military generals who are now backstopping the star player and her violations so they can control the game.

Meanwhile, the congressional team can't seem to play the game as a solid team. Like when it had the ball (the chance to send—read: impeach—the star player out of the game for not playing fair and square), it fumbled.

And now, the game is in its "last two minutes," and still the referee just would not make the calls, putting the outcome of the game, as well as the well-being of the 84 million spectators, in jeopardy.

As an interested outside observer, I still believe that somehow, in the "last two minutes of the game," the congressional team will be able to recover the ball (file another impeachment case and, this time, get it going), as it should, and work as a solid team.

This is the only constitutional solution left for the country to avoid bloodshed. For this, can the 84 million or so spectators count on the members of the House of Representatives? Or would our honorable congressmen rather see the country disintegrate?

—CECIL PERALTA,
ceperal@hotmail.com

Gonzales greater threat than the communists

I CAN'T AGREE MORE WITH THE RADICAL reforms the Partido Demokratiko Sosyalista ng Pilipinas (PDSP) proposed in its letter to the editor (PDI, 3/2/06), except that the party expected President Macapagal-Arroyo to implement those reforms.

As long as Ms Arroyo is at the helm of the government, and National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales is at her side, none of those reforms will happen.

Of course, the PDSP refuses to reject Ms Arroyo as President and Gonzales as her national security adviser because to do so would mean rejecting themselves. Manuel L. Quezon III correctly pointed this out in his column that same day. Like Ms Arroyo, the PDSP—including its founders Gonzales and Fr. Romeo Intengan— has a strong hatred for the "communists." In an INQUIRER news item written by TJ Burgonio, Father Intengan, "a Jesuit closely associated with National Security Adviser Norberto Gonzales through the Partido Demokratiko Sosyalista ng Pilipinas, welcomed the government's action against militant party-list members of the House of Representatives." (PDI, 3/1/06)

I still believe that Gonzales, a staunch anticommunist rumormonger, is behind the rumor of the supposed plot between the CPP/NPA and the rebel Marines to overthrow the Arroyo administration. The rumor gave the President the idea to declare a state of national emergency. Isn't it that Gonzales and company are the greater risk to our national security?

—ARNOLD VAN VUGT,
P.O. Box 237,
Cagayan de Oro City

Butchering dogs is illegal

THE STORY TITLED "BENGUET EXECS DEnounce reports on dog meat trade" (PDI, 3/18/06) quoted Gov. Borromeo Melchor as saying, "We butcher dogs as part of our culture but we never use our customs to justify the passage of any law that would make the dog meat trade lawful."

The story went on to report that the Benguet provincial board had passed a resolution condemning a particular website for spreading the information that the province had sought exemptions from the RA 8485-mandated ban on the sale of dog meat.

I just want to point out that RA 8485 (the Animal Welfare Law) does not ban the sale of dog meat. But it does criminalize the butchering of dogs for their meat. Butchering dogs may be a part of Filipino culture as Melchor said, but it is now illegal in the Philippines.

The act is punishable under RA 8485 by imprisonment of not less than six months but not more than two years, or a fine of not less than P1,000 but not more than P5,000 or both. Of course, the enforcement of law is another matter.

—BILL MITCHELL,
bill.mitchell@pobox.com

Measures to contain oil spill promptly taken

MAY WE CLARIFY THE NEWS REPORT ENTItled "Napocor barge unchecked before setting out to sea," by Nestor Burgos Jr. (PDI, 3/4/06)

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Also, may we correct the figures in the report. The actual oil spill was only 235,000 liters, affecting some 113 hectares out of the total 5,000-plus hectares in Semirara. Directly affected was Barangay Semirara. So far, only about 160 residents have been actually affected by the spill.

For our part, we immediately implemented measures to mitigate the effects of the oil spill, such as effecting clean-up operations together with the Philippine Coast Guard, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and the residents of Barangay Semirara. The cleanup is continuing and we hope to be finished by April 2006. After which, we shall begin the rehabilitation of the affected mangrove areas and start livelihood programs for the affected residents.

—LORENZO S. MARCELO,
vice president,
Small Power Utilities Group (SPUG)

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The Board of Foreign Service Examinations of the Department of Foreign Affairs announces the holding of the -

FOREIGN SERVICE OFFICER (FSO) EXAMINATION

to recruit candidates for appointment to the position of Foreign Service Officer Class IV (FSO IV).

The Examination is composed of three (3) parts which will be held on the following dates:

Qualifying Test:	28 May 2006
Written Examination:	23, 24 and 25 August 2006
Oral Examinations:	To be determined at a later date

IMPORTANT:

(1) Application forms and relevant information regarding the examination may be downloaded from the Department of Foreign Affairs website **(www.dfa.gov.ph).** Forms may also be obtained personally or requested through mail from the following offices of the Department of Foreign Affairs:

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(3) Completed application forms together with the documentary requirements must be returned to any of the DFA Regional Consular Offices enumerated above not later than **10 May 2006,** or to the DFA Main Office not later than **12 May 2006,** for evaluation and processing.

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SLAIN AURORA PUBLISHER'S CASE

DOJ chief relieves prosecutor for bias

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—JUSTICE SECRETARY RAUL Gonzalez has relieved the prosecutor handling the case of a murdered publisher in Aurora over "serious allegations of partiality and bias" for a mayor whom the victim's relatives wanted charged as "mastermind" in the killing.

In Department Order No. 184 issued on March 17, Gonzalez replaced Senior State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco with an investigating panel composed of State Prosecutors Cielitolindo Luyun, Misael Ladaga and Jose Pedro Navera.

Gonzalez designated the panel to be the acting provincial prosecutor of Aurora and ordered it to "immediately take over" the preliminary investigation of the murder of Philip Agustin, publisher of the Starline Times Recorder.

The National Bureau of Investigation and Agustin's relatives filed the case a few days after the May 10, 2005 murder in Dingalan town.

Agustin was shot dead inside his daughter's house a few hours after arriving there to deliver the special edition of his news weekly.

The paper carried stories that dwelt with the slow rehabilitation and resettlement of landslide victims due to the alleged misuse of public funds by Dingalan Mayor Jaime Ylarde.

Gonzalez also tasked the panel to file the corresponding charges and prosecute if the evidence warrants so.

Saying the case was "imbued with public interest," Gonzalez ordered Velasco to turn over the records of the case to the panel within 48 hours.

The panel, on the other hand, was ordered to proceed with the investigation "with deliberate dispatch" and finish it in 15 days.

The relief of Velasco came after the relatives of Agustin filed on March 16 a motion for reconsideration that also asked the disqualification of Velasco.

They said Velasco, in his Jan. 26, 2006 resolution, showed "manifest bias" and "gravely abused his discretion in ignoring the vital [pieces of] evidence implicating Mayor Ylarde as principal by inducement in the murder of Agustin."

"There are enough circumstantial and direct evidence linking [Ylarde] as the mastermind in the crime," Agustin's sister Nenita Mendoza and his daughter Rosebelle Cruz said in their 11-page motion filed before the office of the chief state prosecutor.

Ylarde, who was cleared for "lack of evidence," earlier welcomed Velasco's recommendation for a new investigation by the NBI and the Philippine National Police of his alleged role in the killing.

The mayor denied having a hand in the murder, saying the case was being used by his political foes to attack him.

Suspects Reynaldo Morete, Nilo Morete and Emmanuel Alday had been charged with Agustin's murder.

Reynaldo Morete had been arrested and had turned into a state witness, but the police have yet to arrest his cousin, Nilo and Alday. *Tonette Orejas, PDI C.L. Desk*

Bulacan board exec, soldier dead in ambush

LUCENA CITY—A BULACAN BOARD member and an Army soldier were killed in an encounter between government forces and an undetermined number of New People's Army (NPA) rebels in Barangay Alakaak, Sta. Cruz town in Occidental Mindoro on Friday afternoon.

Lt. Jovelyn Cabading, officer-in-charge of the Army's 204th Infantry Brigade Joint AFP-PNP Civil Relations Co. based in Mindoro island, identified the casualties as Warlito Trinidad, a member of the Bulacan provincial board and certain Pfc. Barrios.

Trinidad died from a bullet wound in the head.

The military said another soldier, Pfc. Edgar Camarinas, was wounded in the encounter between a Special Operation Team from the Army's 80th Infantry Battalion and communist guerillas from the NPA's Lucio de Guzman Command based in Mindoro.

Southern Luzon Command chief Lt. Gen. Pedro Cabuay Jr. said he had no idea why a Bulacan official would be escorted by soldiers.

He said he had yet to receive the official report about the incident.

In Bulacan, vice Gov. Aurelio Plamenco Board Member said Trinidad was visiting an iron ore exploration site in Sta. Cruz when suspected NPA rebels fired at his vehicle.

Plamenco, who fetched Trinidad's remains in Mamburao, Occidental Mindoro, on Saturday, said Trinidad was with eight people, who included businessmen, his brother-in-law, Rommel Galvez, and a soldier, when they were attacked in Barangay Calaac.

Reports said that except for Galvez who suffered from a bullet wound in a foot, Trinidad's other companions were unhurt.

Plamenco said Trinidad's family is engaged in furniture production and also supplies filling materials and gravel to various land development projects in Bulacan.

Trinidad, a former vice mayor of Balagtas town, was serving his first term as provincial board member at the time of his death.

Delfin Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau and Carmela Reyes, PDI Central Luzon Desk

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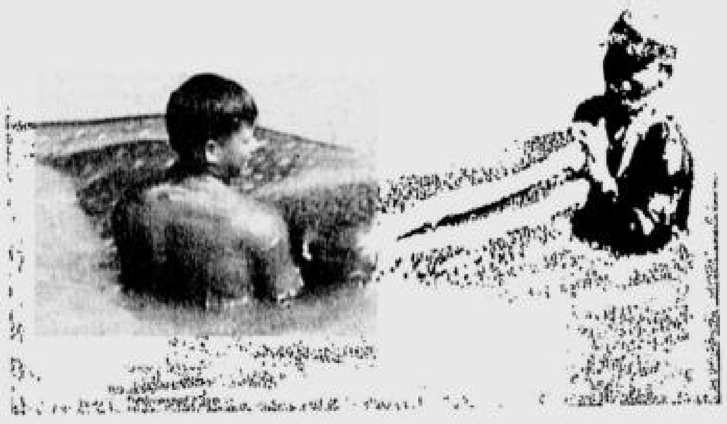

VIRGILIO Dasigan and Nestor Balderama enjoy a moment with the whaleshark they caught and freed in San Miguel Bay.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

CALABANGA, CAMARINES Sur—If not for the information dissemination program on protected marine species of the municipality, two juvenile whale sharks (*Rhicodon typus*) could have easily been fair game for a butcher to cash in on.

On March 21 and 24, two young whale sharks drifted into the inner part of that San Miguel Bay and were caught by a fishing net while feeding on anchovies, sergested shrimps and mullets.

Aware of the giant gentle creatures through a local government program on protected marine species, the fishermen who caught them labored to free the whale sharks from the net.

Vicente Dasigan, 56, said a fish that size could have meant big bucks, but they were taught through the LGU fisheries program that whale sharks are kind creatures and protected by law.

Dasigan and another fisherman, Nestor Balderama, went out to sea early morning of March 21 to check their drift net when they found the whale shark, measuring 6 meters long and about a meter wide, entangled and struggling to get free.

"I knew immediately that it was a whale shark, so that we did not waste time to save it. We tied a rope around its body and moved slowly and carefully towed the creature to the shallow waters," Dasigan narrated.

It took them more than three hours to reach the shallow waters of the coastal village of Sabang, Calabanga town where they untangled the net and alerted the fisheries office and the local government officials of their find.

At 9:30 a.m., March 22, the whale shark was freed from the net and released to deeper waters of the Bay.

Dasigan said he and the other fishermen knew that the whale shark could die if they did not free it. Because of its sheer size and power, it would be very difficult for them to free it in deep water, he said.

On March 24, at about 3 a.m., Dasigan's son Virgilio and Balderama went out again to check their drift net near the place where the whale shark was entangled.

Again, another whale shark, this time bigger—about 6 meters long and 4 meters wide—was entangled in the net.

It took them more than four hours to tow the creature to shallow waters where it was freed from the net and released to deep waters at 9 a.m.

Fisheries technician Rose Intia said the fishermen who caught the whale sharks were skilled in protecting the species and knew how to handle the creature without distressing them.

She said she inspected the two whale sharks and found no signs of distress when they were turned over to the fisheries office and the local government unit.

Mayor Evelyn Yu said the fisheries protection program had been ongoing for years and that the continuing fisheries awareness program targeting the 11 coastal villages of Calabanga had benefited all the protected sea species known to the communities.

The program includes identification of protected marine species, laws on fisheries, preservation and conservation of marine resources and skills training, she said.

Yu said she had organized a task force to look into the upgrading of the marine resource conservation and preservation program and monitor the frequency and regularity of visits of whale sharks so that the place could be developed into a tourism attraction, like the one in Donsol, Sorsogon.

She said the LGU passed an ordinance in 2001 giving incentives to fisherfolk who turn over protected marine species to them.

The incentives range from P500 to P1,000 for marine turtles, and P1,500 to P3,000 for whale sharks, she said.

On March 30, 2004 an 11-meter whale shark, weighing some 2,000 kilograms, was stranded in the San Miguel Bay, she said. It was the first ever recorded whale shark find in the area.

What lures whale sharks into the bay in March has something to do with the peak season of sergested shrimp, anchovies and mullet on which they feed, Intia said.

The San Miguel Bay has an area of 162.125 square kilometers with a soft, muddy bottom and depths of four to six fathoms.

It is where the Bicol River drains the run-off from Albay, Camarines Norte and Camarines Sur. *Juan Escandor Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

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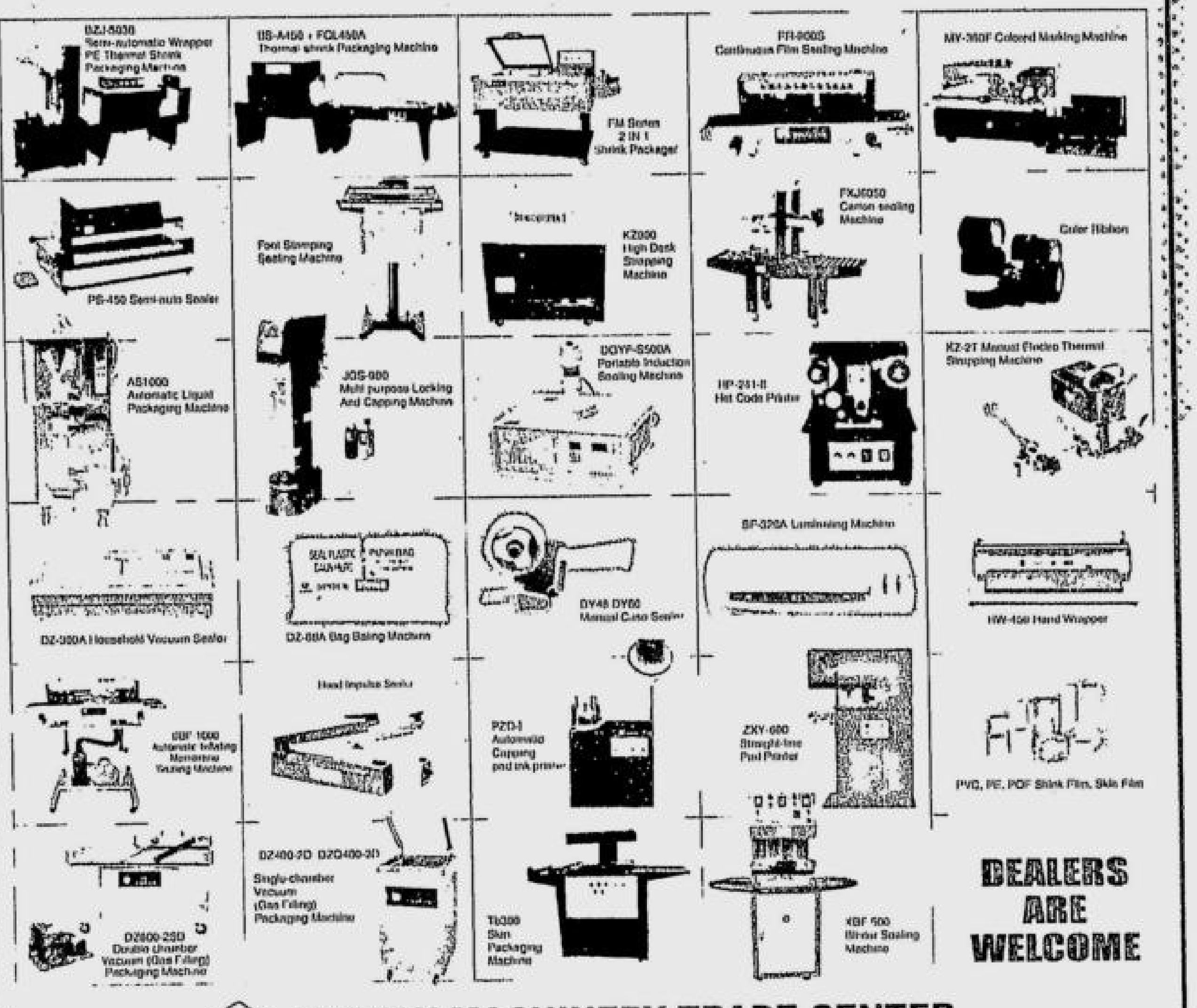
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Governor orders log ban in Muslim Mindanao

COTABATO CITY—GOV. ZALDY AMPATUAN OF the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao has banned logging in the region, citing the need to protect its remaining forest cover.

It was not clear how much forest area the ARMM has these days, but it is considered one of the country's timber corridors.

ARMM Solicitor General Cynthia Sayadi said Ampatuan had also directed Regional Environment Secretary Kabuntalan Emblawa to cancel all logging permits covering concessions in the provinces of Maguindanao, Lanao del Sur, Sulu, Basilan and Tawi-tawi, and in Marawi City.

Sayadi said that in his order, Ampatuan warned violators that they would face the full force of the law.

But she said the shipment of logs cut before the implementation of the ban would be allowed after verification.

Several logging companies operate in the ARMM. Some of them get their wood supply from Malaysia or Indonesia so their operations are not covered by the logging ban, Sayadi said.

But for those cutting trees within the ARMM, Sayadi said they had already been told to stop their activities.

"All violators will be dealt accordingly. Policemen in the region will strictly enforce the logging ban," Sayadi said.

Speaker Hatimil Hassan of the Regional Legislative Assembly (RLA) said there was basis for Ampatuan's order.

Under Republic Act No. 9054 or the law creating the expanded ARMM, the regional government is allowed to implement a total log ban by "canceling, nullifying, and voiding all forest concessions, timber licenses, contracts or agreements of any kind," she said.

Jeoffrey Maitem, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Army official assures safety of radioman in 'order of battle'

BACOLOD CITY—THE TOP MILITARY OFFICIAL in Negros Occidental has given assurance that broadcaster Julius Mariveles will be safe under his care.

"You are safe, you are now under my care," Col. Jerry Jalandoni, 303rd Army Infantry Brigade commander, told Mariveles, news directors of dyEZ Aksyon Radyo Bacolod, when they met on Thursday.

But Mariveles said he would not feel safe until his name was removed from the military's order of battle over his alleged involvement in the communist movement.

He and "Article 3," an alliance of Negros journalists, on Saturday said a verbal assurance was not enough. They said his name should be removed from the list of top Communist Party of the Philippines-New People's Army leaders in the Visayas drawn up by the military's Central Command (Centcom).

The continued inclusion of Mariveles' name in the list poses a clear danger to his life, as well as to his free pursuit of his profession, a statement from Article 3 said.

Jalandoni said he would investigate why Mariveles' name was listed. If he is not satisfied with the reason, he said he would immediately recommend the name's removal.

Jalandoni also said he would raise this concern with Lt. Gen. Samuel Bagasing, AFP Centcom chief, today.

Article 3 has asked Negros Occidental Gov. Joseph Marañon to help clarify "this very disturbing development" by facilitating a dialogue with Jalandoni and provincial police director Senior Supt. Charles Calima.

Mariveles said he had never served as secretary general of the party-list Bayan Muna as the military claimed, but of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) in Negros.

He said he left the group in 2003 when he was employed by Aksyon Radyo-Bacolod, which is owned by Manila Broadcasting Co.

Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau

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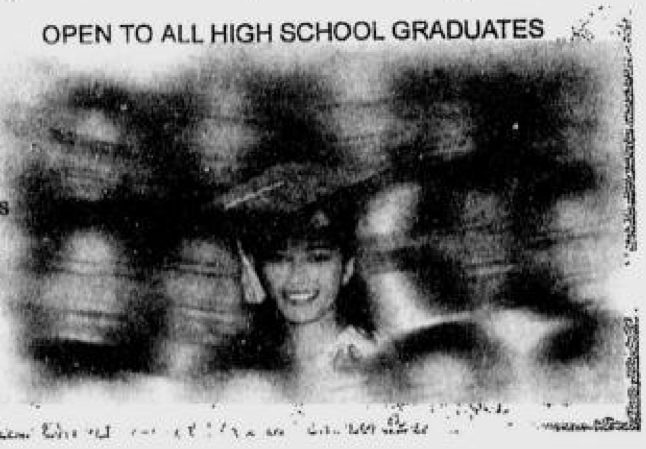

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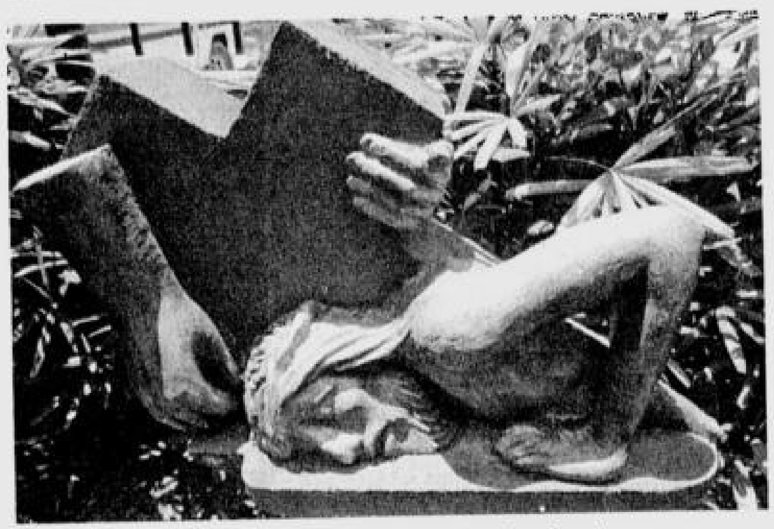
Chapel built on hope draws steady stream of pilgrims

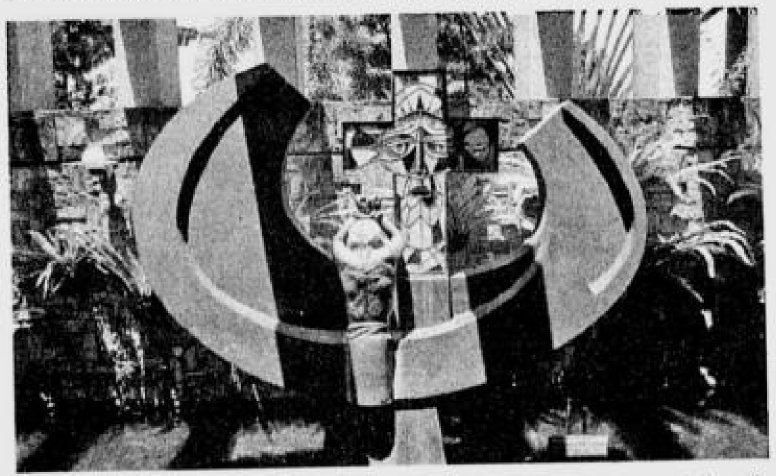
From page A1

altar—a massive wooden face of Jesus sculpted in the middle of a huge cross extending toward the top of the tent-like structure. It was done by sculptor Toym Imao, a Marist alumnus, who did the rest of the carvings in the 350-seat chapel.

The cross, placed in the middle of a wall carving molded from *lahar* from Mt. Pinatubo, contains Lenten images of a palm leaf, silver coins, a whip, nails and an unusual pair of hands on each end. Jose Nacianceno, head of the Marist campus ministry, says the hands belong to Mary and her Son.



7TH STATION of the Cross: Simon lifts a healing hand.



4TH STATION of the Cross: "I'm mocked and flogged for your follies."

'Pinoy Jesus'

It's unmistakably a "Pinoy Jesus," a brown-skinned Christ much like the image of the pregnant Mary done by sculptor Rey Contreras.

The "Ihay Maria ng Magnificat" is the chapel's version of a similar Contreras carving used in the "Jericho March," a prayer rally organized by church and left-leaning groups against Estrada in 2000.

Without the sickle in the other Magnificat image, the Marist version depicts the Virgin Mary in a stride while clutching a staff in her left hand with a basket of rice stalks slung around her right shoulder.

They all signify her role as one who walks with her people, especially the poor.

Nacianceno says the chapel was built like a tent on an octagonal base representing the Beatitudes to portray a "pilgrim Church, its people always on the move." And like a tent, it neither has doors, ready to embrace pilgrims from anywhere, anytime.

Below the chapel are the offices of the campus ministry and the Sagip Ka 2000 Foundation. It's a project offering subsidized hospitalization and funeral services in exchange for a member's commitment to basic values, such as cleanliness, orderliness, honesty and fear of God.

'God above all'

"In essence, the chapel being on top means we put God above all else. The structures below it symbolize the importance of service," he tells the INQUIRER during a tour of the chapel last Thursday.

CHAPEL of the Magnificat at Marist School in Marikina City.

PHOTOS BY JOAN BONDOC

Even the way the pews are arranged has a subtle spiritual message to it. De Leon says the semicircular arrangement is like small ripples created from the altar by the Good News of Jesus, which is the key to human salvation according to Christian belief.

With the chapel having no doors, the Marist community hopes that the message will be multiplied a thousandfold, especially in times of man-made chaos.

"Order out of chaos—that is the theme of our salvation history," De Leon explains. "God puts order into our chaotic world. It is only by being attentive to His words that we can achieve inner peace."

Come Holy Week, the chapel expects even more visitors.

Stations of the Cross

It's no ordinary experience, seeing the Stations of the Cross around the elevated structure that somehow looks like a more decorative version of the historic Edsa Shrine. It's like taking a walk in a Catholic museum or religious park, if there were one.

Each station is a product of diligent work, a showcase of Filipino ingenuity, carefully placed around a landscaped path with palm trees and orchids.

But don't be confused. The stations are a digression from the traditional, De Leon admits.

They begin with the Last Supper, portrayed by Imao with a dozen pairs of sculpted cupped hands as if ready to receive the Body and Blood of Christ. One pair is black, apparently representing the hands of Judas who would betray Jesus, according to the Bible.

The Fourth Station combines the scourging at the pillar and the crowning of thorns. Here is a stone carving of Jesus facing a stained-glass cross over a small lagoon adorned with orchids.

"I'm mocked and flogged for your follies," reads a framed message which, explains De Leon, takes the place of the usual title of the station. "We prefer to use the words of Christ."

For a first-time visitor, it's better to pay attention to the details. Slowly but surely, they'll make you realize that all is not lost in this chaotic world we call home.

CSC reels from GMA prerogative to appoint gov't executives

From page A1

But "you cannot be in a career position if you are more than 65," a miffed David pointed out.

That's supposedly a "given," remarked Director Lorenzo Danipog, CSC point man in the Cordillera Administrative Region.

Appalling

The CSC regional director described as "appalling" Abriol's choice as manager of the government estate, an Office of the President-attached agency and tourist attraction in the country's summer capital.

But Abriol believes otherwise. Contacted by phone, she insisted she was cut out for the job.

Some of her credentials include being a former vice president of the Philippine Dental Association and executive vice president of the Philippine Association of Hospital Dentists.

She described herself as "very capable," "very well-organized," and just 12 units short of a master's degree in public administration (at the University of Baguio).

Abriol also said she "won't mind serving the President till I'm ... maybe 77."

At the 13-hectare mansion, Abriol holds the rank of Director 4. She replaced Rose Quineta who, mansion staff said, had been "promoted to one of the offices in Malacañang."

The CSC only learned about Abriol's appointment when she showed up during a recent function of the Cordillera Administrative Region Association of Regional Executives (CARE) in Baguio.

In a CARE form, which Abriol had filled up, reportedly with the help of an aide, she disclosed that she was a native of Binalonan town in Pangasinan and a dentist by profession.

Magnifying glass

During the CARE socials, the new mansion boss "seemed to be having difficulty moving around."

"She was being led by someone and she looked frail. When she was asked to read something, she could not do it because she did not bring a magnifying glass," David quoted her staff as describing Abriol.

"In the absence of appointment papers, we assumed she had passed the dental board examinations. But her post (which is the same level as a Cabinet official) requires that she should at least be a career executive. We don't know yet if she's eligible," Danipog said.

Abriol said her term was "coterminus with the President."

A check with the Palace disclosed that Abriol's appointment was "temporary" (read: the appointee has met all the job requirements except the appropriate eligibility and only in the absence of someone who was qualified and eligible).

Malacañang also said there was no age limit for political appointees.

CSC rules taken for granted

Abriol's job status notwithstanding, CSC rules have been broken and the agency taken for granted anew by the administration, David countered.

Another "glaring example of Palace abuse" was the short-lived appointment of Dennis Cunanan as executive director of the Commission on Higher Education or CHEd.

Speaker Jose de Venecia endorsed Cunanan's appointment right after the May 2004 presidential elections, according to David.

The INQUIRER repeatedly tried but failed to get De Venecia's comment (through Noel Albano, a House of Representatives media officer).

Cunanan had allegedly "packaged a scholarship program (intended for selected student leader-supporters of Ms Arroyo) that GMA's party used during the election campaign."

College dropout

The political appointee was "in his early 30s, a former University of the Philippines student leader. Without any doubt, *may utak* (intelligent). But he was not qualified for the post because he's not a college graduate. No way!" David said.

Sometime in late 2004, some CHEd officials, obviously not happy with Cunanan's appointment, came to see the CSC chair to discuss the problem.

After their meeting, David went straight to Malacañang with the bad news: The CHEd union was set to go on strike in protest of Cunanan's "illegal appointment."

She got a call from the Palace shortly afterward. "They said, 'Karina, *tatanggalin na* (he will be removed).' I said, '*Di tanggalin n'yo* (So remove him).'"

Irony

Here's the irony, according to David: "Malacañang appointed a noncollege graduate as top official of the CHEd. At the same time, the Palace tried to dismiss those poor (Radio-TV Malacañang) cameramen because they don't have college degrees."

Cunanan, currently the national president of the Junior Chamber International Philippines, one of the prime movers of last year's search for the Ten Outstanding Young Men or TOYM, could not be reached for comment.

Eufemio Domingo, retired chair of the Presidential Anti-Graft Commission (and the Commission on Audit before the PAGC), calls the CSC's presidential appointee-related problems "eye-openers even for experienced Palace watchers."

The government has "insisted that we professionalize the lower ranks in the bureaucracy. But political appointees—just anybody—seem to rule at the managerial level," David said.

"Legally, there's nothing wrong (with political appointments)," David said. "However, the effect on the bureaucracy is major."

Demoralization

Political appointees not only block promotion channels but also add to demoralization in the bureaucracy "because they're from the outside. What's worrisome, once they get in, they don't want to leave," she said.

David said that "if the President really wants to have a professional bureaucracy, it is important that [Malacañang] follow civil service rules."

Part of her functions is to apprise Ms Arroyo of Palace violations of CSC rules and regulations.

Nothing illegal

Both Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita and the President's chief of staff, Michael Defensor, disputed the CSC chair's claims.

Ermita dismissed the disclosures to this paper as "not accurate" and "not valid." He said: "We're doing their job."

Defensor said there was "nothing illegal about political appointments."

"It's a question of competence and professionalism. But good managers need not always come from within the bureaucracy," he said.

Because "some outsiders can outperform people from within. Proof of that—a number of political appointees have been performing exceptionally well," he told the INQUIRER.

Defensor did not name the officials that he was referring to.

Relieved without just cause

Another "test case," David said, involved Education Undersecretary Juan Miguel Luz whom Malacañang relieved late last year "without just cause."

Luz had allegedly earned the ire of the Office of the President when he returned P15 million worth of checks from the President's Social Fund intended for Zambales Rep. Antonio Diaz, an Arroyo supporter. The checks violated state accounting rules, according to Luz.

Said David: "When they realized he was a career executive service officer, they transferred him to DOLE (Department of Labor and Employment). He has gone on leave and filed a case. Let's see what happens."

One time, David recalled, the President "promoted a policeman (with a bad service record). I urged her to withdraw the promotion. That cop should have been dismissed instead. The policeman is about to retire and the President has not answered."

Beyond question

David has also been writing letters to Ermita and the Palace search committee. But "they always say, that's the prerogative of the President."

"Because there's such a thing as presidential prerogative," Ermita said. "And when the President makes a choice, nobody should question it."

Ms Arroyo appoints "the best and the brightest—those who can really help her in governance," he said.

Ermita did not say if Carissa Vera Perez Cruz, a daughter of De Venecia's wife Gina from her first marriage, and Ma. Theresa "Angel" Pelayo, the 28-year-old daughter of Mayor Jerry Pelayo of Candaba, Pampanga, were among the outstanding political appointees he was talking about.

The 30-something Cruz is currently the regional operations group undersecretary at the Department of Trade and Industry.

Pelayo, whose father is a staunch supporter of the President, last year was named trade assistant secretary. Like Cruz, she was assigned to the regional operations group.

Cruz and Pelayo had bagged their posts allegedly due to their respective families' close ties to the powers that be, according to CSC insiders.

Both said they were not bothered by the accusation. They also disputed allegations that they had no job experience.

Said the Internet edition of a weekend publication: "Perhaps the connections to influential people helped, and the promotion (from DTI assistant secretary to undersecretary) in less than a year raised eyebrows."

Cruz said she couldn't "help who I'm related to and I'm proud of it. And even with that, I have my own set of accomplishments and goals."

Harvard

Cruz had attended both Harvard University and Boston University where she obtained her master's degree in business administration.

From 1995 to 1997, the ex-Morgan Stanley financial advisor and Time Warner business scholar was project manager of the Center for International Trade Expositions and Missions, a DTI-attached agency.

Like Cruz, Pelayo could have settled in the United States but joined government service instead. "I guess for love of country," she said.

Pelayo earlier worked for Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan, "drafting press statements, news releases and economic briefers," among other tasks.

A BS management in communications technology graduate of the Ateneo de Manila University, Pelayo obtained her master's in business administration from UP and attended a two-year administration and management course at Harvard.

Minimum standards

Prospective state personnel, including political appointees, need to meet four minimum qualification standards, all set by the CSC.

"We determine what kind of degree you need for a particular position. On experience, how many years of supervision or none at all for the entry position, training and eligibility," David said.

"The only standard measurement of quality is the common exams given by the CSC. If you cannot pass the professional (or subprofessional) exams, you are not allowed (to join the state workforce). If there are no other applicants you can stay for one year."

"After that, we keep on looking. The moment, even within one year, a qualified eligible comes, you're out," David said.

She said many undersecretaries and assistant secretaries, who benefited from political appointments, were real professionals. "But even if they came from government, the jump is large. You'll find they are either crossovers or you can pinpoint who their *padrinos* (backers) are."

"A number of undersecretaries and assistant secretaries hold nonplantilla positions, which are prescribed in every year's General Appropriations Act. Four usecs for this, three for that, two for this, etc. Now, is it legal to appoint seven usecs and eight asecs for an agency like the Department of Transportation and Communication?" David said.

During his term, President Joseph Estrada was routinely "criticized for appointing too many advisers, including one for the carabao."

"GMA has exceeded (the number of Estrada Cabinet members and advisers). *Grabe ang dami.* They are already close to 50," said David, who by the way was a member of the original Estrada Cabinet.

Ms Arroyo's coterie of presidential advisers, with titles like Presidential Assistant (PA) for Job Creation, PA on Strategic Concerns, PA on Safety Nets, PA on OFWs, PA for Clark and Subic, PA on New Government Centers, PA on Revenue Enhancement, PA on Entrepreneurship, and PA on Entertainment, among others, adds up to a top-heavy executive branch, Domingo said.

One of those on the list is former PA for Mindanao Jesus Dureza, recently named PA on the Peace Process. He concurrently heads the Office of the President in Southern Philippines and the Mindanao Economic Development Council.

Waste

"For sure, these people are not cheap to come by. Apparently, GMA doesn't seem to mind the waste," according to Domingo.

Other "excess appointments" include the newly created post of social welfare undersecretary for Mindanao and positions in the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women, said David who wondered aloud, "where do they get the money for all the excess (appointments)?"

Contacted by phone, former Social Welfare Secretary Corazon "Dinky" Soliman confirmed the irregularity.

"Charging the new post's budget requirements to the department's regular appropriations was out of the question. Guess what? The Office of the President took care of the bill," Soliman said.

A "major flaw" in the Constitution is partly to blame for the CSC's appointments-related predicament, said David. "While the Charter pronounces the need for a professional civil service, it leaves to the President more than 10,000 appointments."

But "why that many? Apart from the Cabinet and a few heads of agencies who necessarily should be alter egos of the President, if you look at the law all positions from undersecretary down should be career executives," she said.

Since the President does not personally know the 10,000-plus people she is appointing to various posts, "the process opens up to politicking and political patronage," David said.

MBA

"What does that do to the minds of professional bureaucrats? They know that they only have to say yes and agree to whatever their *padrinos* want. Thus, the joke among government personnel is "*may* MBA *ka ba?*"

MBA stands for "*May* Backer *Ako* (I have a backer)," David revealed. "A master's degree is required before anyone becomes division chief. For some people it doesn't really matter as long as they have MBAs."

But "that changes the capacity of people to be professional," she said. "If all of these people are presidential appointees, who challenges the President then?"

Being the state's personnel manager, CSC approval is supposedly a must for all appointments to the government.

But the commission cannot disapprove those involving political appointees.

"For record purposes, their oaths of office are forwarded to us by Malacañang. (But) disciplinary jurisdiction is by the appointing authority, which is the President," David lamented. *(To be continued tomorrow.)*

‘Abadilla 5’ death convicts seek help of United Nations

From page A1

the Philippine government and the Supreme Court with the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights based in Geneva, Switzerland, on March 17.

The complaint was filed on behalf of the two convicts by Soliman Santos Jr., a human rights lawyer, and Cecilia Jimenez, the collaborating counsel in Geneva.

Lumanog and Santos, together with Cesar Fortuna, Rameses de Jesus and Joel de Jesus, were meted out the death penalty seven years ago by the Quezon City Regional Trial Court for the June 13, 1996, ambush-killing of former Philippine Constabulary Col. Rolando N. Abadilla.

The case of the so-called Abadilla 5 has drawn the attention of the London-based Amnesty International. The human rights group, which has won the Nobel Prize, has documented and found credible the claim of the five death convicts that they were tortured into confessing to the murder after police held them incommunicado for several days after the killing of Abadilla in Quezon City.

SC decision

On the basis of the "tortured" confessions, conflicting eyewitness accounts and insufficient physical evidence, Quezon City RTC Judge Jaime Salazar convicted the Abadilla 5.

Santos said the complaint filed with the UN agency stemmed from the Supreme Court's decision in January to transfer the review of the case of the Abadilla 5 to the Court of Appeals.

Death penalty convictions are automatically elevated to the Supreme Court for review. In the case of the Abadilla 5, however, the Supreme Court cited its July 2004 ruling allowing the immediate review by the Court of Appeals of such death penalty cases before these are elevated to the highest court of the land.

Santos said the Abadilla 5 case had been pending in the Supreme Court for five years and was "ripe" for decision before it was referred to the Court of Appeals, a lower tribunal.

"The right (to review by a higher tribunal) is negated by the Supreme Court's late-in-the-day passing the buck to the Court of Appeals when it could have and should just have proceeded to decide the ripe case under certain established procedural rules," Santos and Jimenez said in the complaint.

Further delay

"Of what use is the right to review when the higher tribunal to which the death penalty case was directly and automatically elevated under existing rules refuses to perform its duty of review?" the two lawyers told the UN agency.

KURATONG BALELENG
ABADILLAS
OTSO-OTSO
HUSTISYANG Pagong
KORTE SUPREMA Aksyon Na!
ABADILLA 5
KURATONG BALELENG

ACTIVIST priest Fr. Robert Reyes protests the slow resolution of the Abadilla 5 and other cases in the Supreme Court in a 2004 picket. PDI PHOTO.

This new process would only further delay the resolution of the case, the two lawyers said.

"The transfer of this case to the Court of Appeals, which has to start from scratch studying it with its voluminous records, will prejudice the accused in terms of undue delay and expense which they understandably wish to avoid at this point in their sorry lives, innocent of the crime but languishing in jail for about (10) years," they said in the complaint.

The death sentence meted out to the Abadilla 5 sparked an uproar here and abroad after the Alex Boncayao Brigade, a communist hit squad, claimed responsibility for the killing. Subsequent pronouncements by the Philippine National Police also supported the claim of the ABB.

During the three-year trial, the Abadilla 5 were never linked to the ABB or any communist group. The gun, which the assassins seized from Abadilla after the ambush, was recovered from an ABB gunman who was killed in an encounter in Rodriguez, Rizal, on March 31, 1998, according to top military intelligence officers.

To prove its claim of responsibility, the ABB also turned over to a priest the gold watch that was taken from Abadilla. The judge, however, refused to accept all these vital pieces of evidence that would have cast serious doubts on the guilt of the Abdilla 5.

The Abadilla 5 have been on death row at the New Bilibid Prisons in Muntinlupa City for the past seven years, awaiting resolution of their appeal to the Supreme Court.

Optional protocol

Santos said the complaint filed with the UN agency was made pursuant to a mechanism called "individual communication" under the optional protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, to which the Philippines is a state party.

The complaint said the Supreme Court's decision to place the case under review by the Court of Appeals violated several rights provided under the international covenant. These are the right to a review by a higher tribunal, the right against undue delay in the trial, the right to equal protection of the law, the right to a fair and impartial hearing, the right to life, and the right to liberty and security of a person.

The complaint pointed out that the Supreme Court recently denied the motion of the death convicts in the rape-murder of the Chiong sisters in Cebu City to refer their case to the Court of Appeals.

This showed the Supreme Court has the discretion to review death penalty cases if it wants to, the complaint said.

Santos and Jimenez said the complaint was not about the death penalty decision of the Quezon City RTC or any possible affirmation of the conviction by higher courts but only about the "undue transfer" of the case to the Court of Appeals.

The two lawyers also said they had already exhausted all available domestic remedies in the long years the case had been pending in the courts. They said there was no more remedy for them in the Philippines because the action was taken by the Supreme Court, which is the highest court in the land. Thus, their decision to elevate the case to the United Nations.

Santos told the INQUIRER that a favorable resolution by the UN agency on the complaint could at best exert only "moral and diplomatic" pressure on the Philippine government.

"In the end, it's up to the Philippine government to act on any recommendation by the United Nations," he said.

Marcosian ploy seen in ‘people’s initiative’

From page A1

stituencies. From this perspective, the people's initiative tends to deepen the cleavage and is, thus, divisive.

Setting aside the issue of whether the people's initiative is a constitutionally mandated mode of constitutional revision, I would rather leave the debate to constitutional experts until their faces are blue and the heavens fall, before the Supreme Court mercifully intervenes to hand down its magisterial ruling.

My task is to point out the political implications of the people's initiative for putting to rest the nagging issue of the President's legitimacy, the main source of the political unrest and instability over the past nine months.

The people's initiative seeks to obtain through people's assemblies the mandate to revise the Constitution, by collecting the signatures of at least 12 percent of the total number of registered voters and at least 3 percent of every congressional district's registered voters, in order to comply with the letter of the Constitution.

Power of patronage

Whether the administration can get this vote to support a petition for amending the Constitution and kick off the amendment process, it is clearly not sparing any effort, including the use of its patronage resources, to muster the required signatures in the local assemblies.

There are already many reports coming from the provinces of the distribution of largesse. Among these, according to INQUIRER correspondents in the provinces, are cash and rice.

The administration is using not only patronage resources but, more significantly, has mobilized the political infrastructure of its support in the rural areas and its political machinery that proved effective in giving Ms Arroyo the vote that enabled her to win the 2004 elections.

Resurrecting Marcos

The initiative rests on the shoulders of local cadres lined up behind the governors and mayors, whose national leagues have backed the President in her showdowns with the city-based Gloria-resign movements in the streets and in Congress during the impeachment process.

Given the deep reserves of the resources of the presidency, let alone its emergency powers, there's a good chance that Ms Arroyo will get the signatures nominally required to start the revision process, under the people's initiative mode.

But the campaign has already come under attack as a resurrection of the method used by then President Ferdinand Marcos when he held a referendum for the 1973 Constitution, which transformed Philippine democracy into a dictatorship and installed an authoritarian system.

Cutting edge

In that referendum, members of the barangays were assembled to raise their hands (not vote in a secret ballot) if they approved of a constitution they had hardly read or understood. It is true that in many cases, the people were asked, according to eyewitnesses, "Would you vote for rice?"

They did vote, not exactly for rice, and the yes vote was an overwhelming success for Marcos' first experiment of plebiscitary democracy.

This legacy appears to be resurfacing in the current initiative, this time designed to be the cutting edge of another process of constitutional revision after the two other options of constitutional change—convening a constituent assembly or calling a constitutional convention—had hit an impasse.

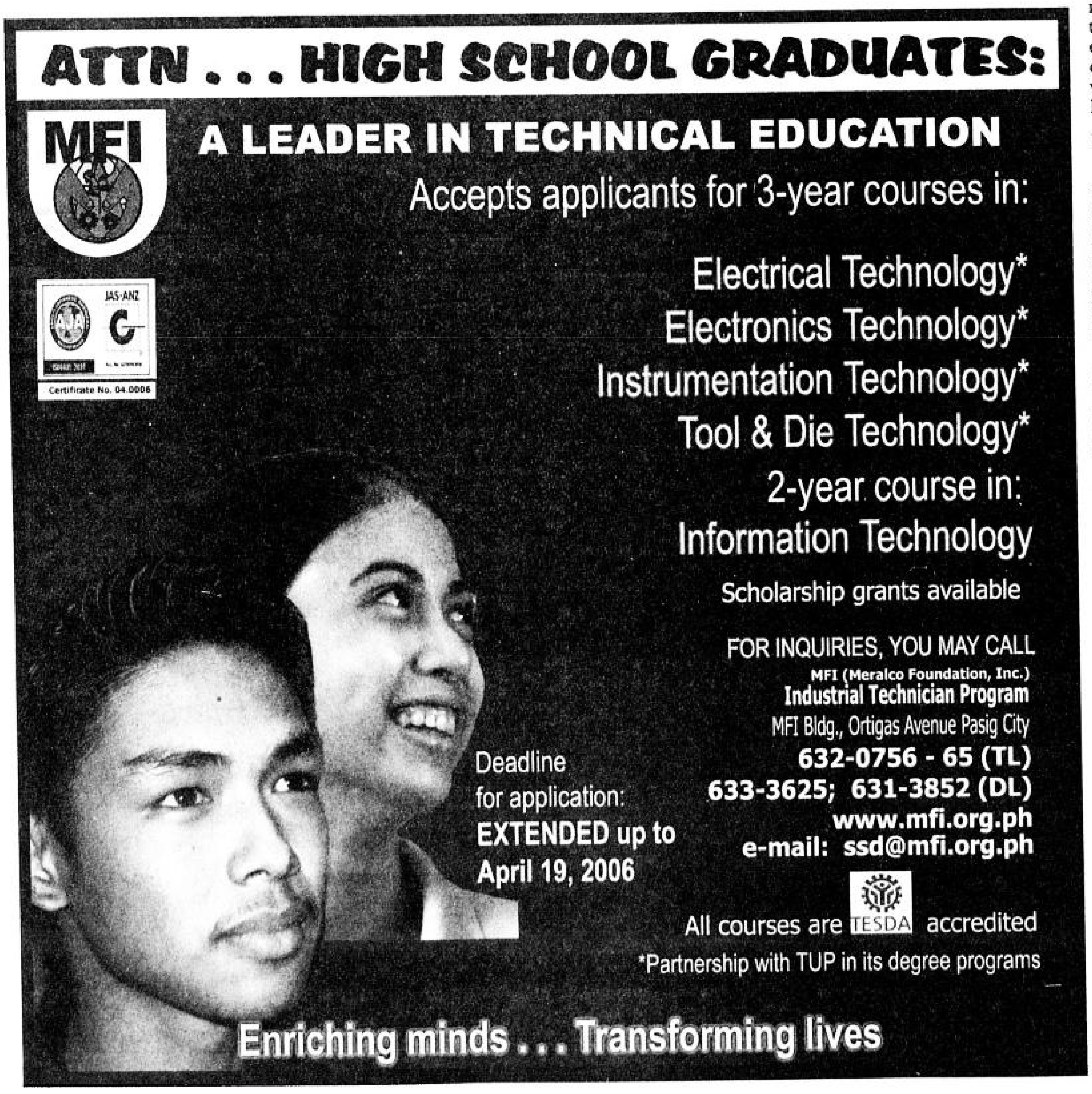
One cloud after another

It is extremely important for the success of the initiative that the exercise is not tainted with irregularities or abuse in the collection of signatures.

The legal objections are serious enough, but the problem is that any results perceived to be from the rigging of the signatures will create another issue of legitimacy—the legitimacy of the signature collection process.

The administration cannot afford another legitimacy issue until it has erased the more serious and fundamental one—that stemming from the disclosure of the Garcillano tapes.

Thus, apart from the legal and constitutional issues raised by constitutional lawyers, the people's initiative has started with a big handicap involving the process itself that dooms it to failure as a means of putting closure to the tapes and legitimacy issues.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Senators to block Cha-cha campaign

From page A1

ments for revising the Charter.

The group did not say how so many million signatures could have been collected in such a brief span.

But even if the administration succeeded in its campaign, the signatures collected will not escape the scrutiny of the Senate, Senate Pro Tempore Juan Flavier said.

"If they gather, say, 5 million signatures, we will examine each signature. That will take forever," Flavier said in an interview.

The administration senator also said that if a congressman filed a bill providing for an enabling law that would carry the people's initiative forward, such a measure would still need the consent of the senators.

"What if we don't concur?" Flavier said.

Two other senators, Joker Arroyo and Richard Gordon, said the issue might have to be resolved in the Supreme Court.

"The fate and future of the country now rest with the Supreme Court. That Malacañang has so designed it that way cannot be discounted," Arroyo said.

He predicted that the administration's two-pronged approach to Charter change—by a people's initiative and through the House-initiated constituent assembly—would eventually be challenged in court by civic and nongovernment organizations.

Need of urgency

"The administration has decided, come hell or high water, to change in a giant leap, our 100-year-old presidential and bicameral system of government to a parliamentary and unicameral form with which the country has no prior experience," Arroyo said in a statement.

He said the Supreme Court already ruled in 1997 that the law was inadequate to support a people's initiative.

Insofar as convening Congress into a constituent assembly to rewrite the Charter, administration allies in the House cannot do it alone despite their efforts to collect 195 signatures to support a resolution for a constituent assembly, Arroyo said.

He said this was why the high tribunal had to resolve with dispatch pending cases questioning the legality of Ms Arroyo's Presidential Proclamation No. 1017 and Executive Order No. 464 lest it be overtaken by events.

"The Supreme Court must, with scrupulous urgency, resolve one way or the other these twin cases before it is overtaken by two more overriding cases that shall, as sure as the sun sets, land on its lap," he said.

Otherwise, it would be saddled with four controversial cases at the same time, Arroyo added.

Nation's future

"Four cases involving violations of the Constitution? The public will be watching with keen anticipation how the Supreme Court will dispose of the first two, EO 464 and Proclamation No. 1017," he said.

PP 1017 enabled Ms Arroyo to declare a state of national emergency, which she lifted after one week. EO 464 has empowered her to prohibit any government official from testifying in congressional hearings on scandals wracking her administration.

"The decision on the first two cases involving presidential power would be the fair gauge of how they will dispose of the next two cases on changing the Constitution," Arroyo said.

"The future of the nation is in the hands of the Supreme Court," he said.

Gordon, who ran for the Senate under the administration ticket but now calls himself an independent, warned of dire consequences if the high tribunal reversed itself on its 1997 ruling on the lack of an enabling law to support a people's initiative.

"If the Supreme Court makes a 180-degree turn, it will boil down to a one-man rule masquerading as democracy," Gordon said.

He said the holding of a people's initiative despite legal and constitutional impediments was weakening the Constitution.

"GMA is very comfortable with the Supreme Court," Gordon said when asked if Ms Arroyo was pinning her hopes on the high tribunal reversing its earlier ruling.

"This is a GMA-appointed Supreme Court. So there's some moral suasion there."

Gordon said that by insisting on a people's initiative, the administration could provoke a constitutional crisis.

JDV defends initiative

"It's eroding whatever value the people put in the Constitution," the chair of the Senate committee on constitutional amendments said.

"Whoever has become the President has tailored the Constitution to fit his or her personal interests. And it's happening again."

Senate President Franklin Drilon said the chamber was carefully studying what steps to take.

"Should we go to the [Commission on Elections] first or go straight to the Supreme Court? We have to discuss (this) with our legal team," Drilon said.

"We are looking at the possibility of an institutional response considering that a number of senators feel strongly about the issue," Senate Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan said.

Speaker Jose de Venecia defended the people's initiative, saying: "It marks the start of political reforms that we need."

Nograles conceded that "at some point," swords would have to be drawn to force the Senate to agree to Charter change.

"The Senate says the people do not want Cha-cha. Congressmen, mayors, governors, etc., say the people want it. Half of Congress wants it. The executive department wants it. The local government units want it, too. But 20 senators stand in the way and the nation stands still?" Nograles said.

With a report from Frank Cimatu, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

What is it about? JDV's people ask

DAGUPAN CITY—SPEAKER Jose de Venecia Jr. may be a champion of Charter change but his influence apparently has not been felt in a village in his own district.

On Saturday, about 50 residents of Barangay Tambac gathered for a barangay assembly where they expected to be clarified about proposed changes in the Constitution.

No one signed any endorsement for Cha-cha.

Resident Susan Yadao said barangay leaders failed to explain the issues involved.

"(It) was not because they rejected Cha-cha, but it was because they did not understand what the issue was all about," said Yadao, a radio reporter.

In Marinduque, Liga ng mga Barangay national president James Marty Lim denied that Malacañang was behind the synchronized barangay assemblies held over the weekend.

"I find nothing irregular with the conduct of the simultaneous barangay assemblies. We have been doing this since 2000," Lim said.

He said Malacañang would not fund such assemblies since the barangays were using their respective funds specifically allotted for such political activities.

Lim also denied the assemblies were held to gather signatures in support of the administration plan to amend the Constitution.

In Bataan, Gov. Enrique "Tet" Garcia took strong exception to an INQUIRER report that sacks of rice and PhilHealth cards were being handed out to barangay residents in exchange for their support of Charter change.

Garcia said it was true that all 3,000 barangay tanod, 1,000 barangay health workers and 230 barangay daycare workers in Bataan were being given P200 a month to augment their incomes.

"But they had been receiving these benefits long before the so-called Cha-cha signature campaign started," Garcia said.

Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau, Gerald Gene R. Querubin and Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

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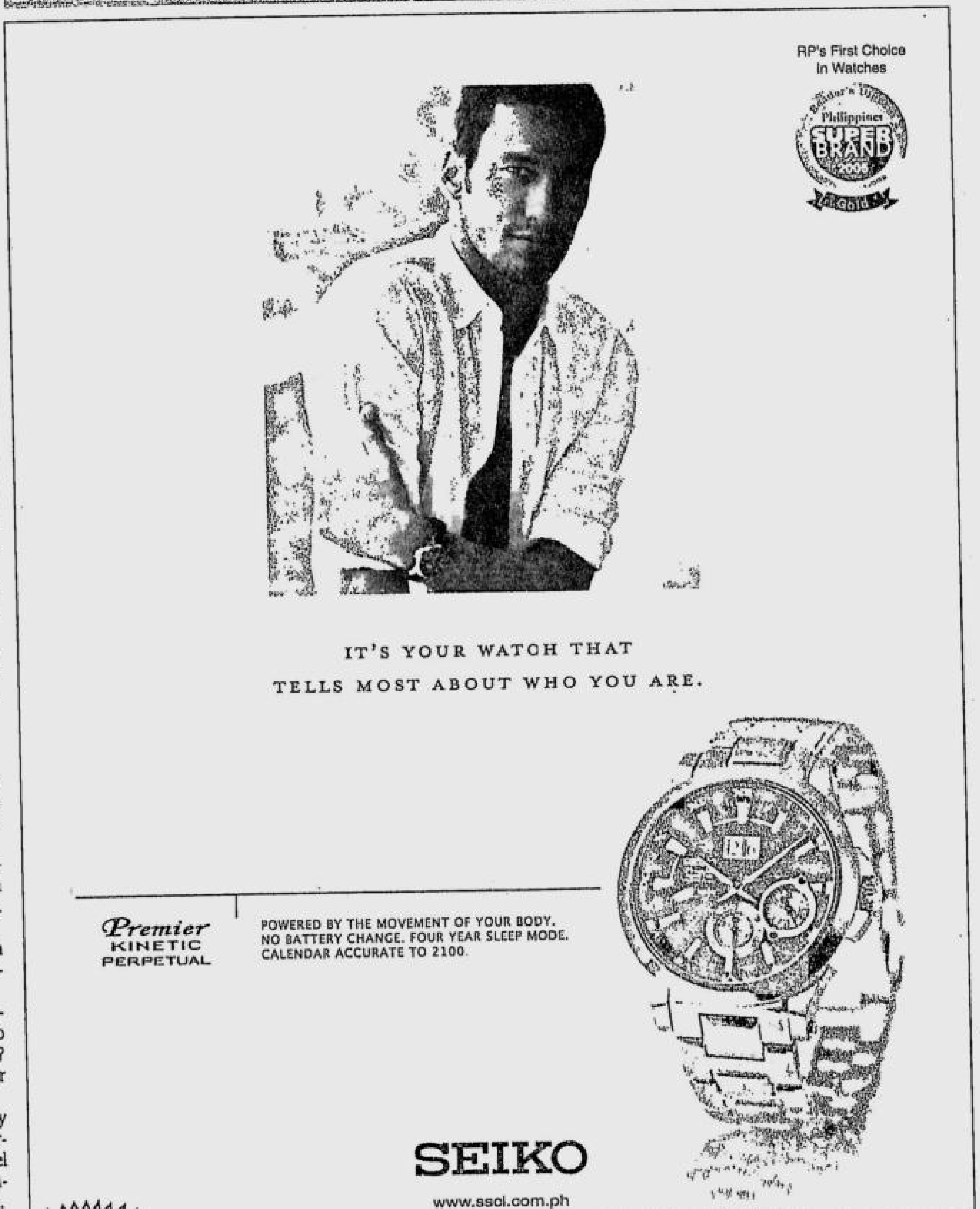
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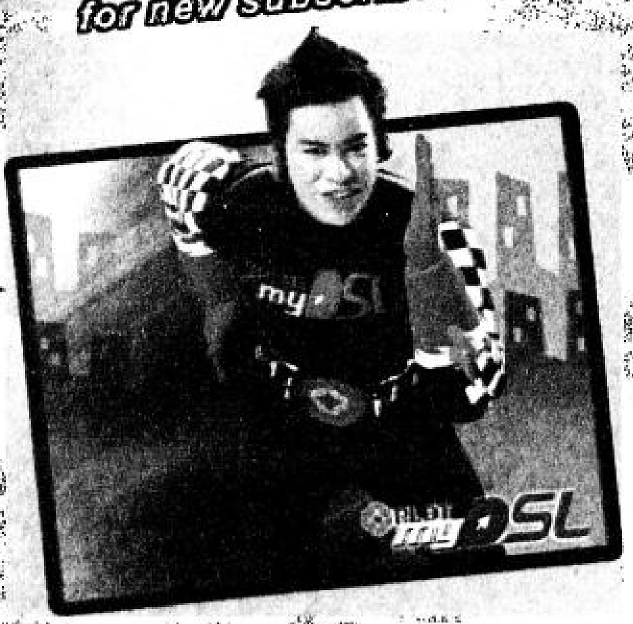
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WHAT'S INSIDE

- **Tales of the City: Ice hockey teacher one of Asia's best** /A26

Makati drug 'mini-mart' raided

By Tarra V. Quismundo

LAWMEN YESTERDAY RAIDED A drug "mini-mart," this time in Makati City.

Raided was the Labradores Compound in Barangay Rizal, a 200-sq m lot which housed 11 shanties. Sixteen persons—nine men and seven women—were arrested inside some of the houses on suspicion that they were involved in the drug trade.

The police also seized a yet to be determined amount of shabu and marijuana in seven of the shanties.

The four other houses were not raided because their owners were not present.

The raid was conducted by a team from the Makati Police Department's Station Anti-Illegal Drugs (SAID) unit, the Makati Anti-Drug Abuse Council (Madac), and the Special Weapons and Tactics unit.

"We received a report that drug use in that area was rampant. It might have gotten bigger and become similar to the drug den in Pasig if we had ignored it," said MPD SAID chief, Supt. Angel Sumulong.

He was referring to the shabu mart in Pasig City, a compound of 30 to 40 shanties allegedly being used as drug dens, which police raided last month. The compound was just a few meters away from the City Hall and the Eastern Police District headquarters.

Yesterday's raid followed weeks of surveillance which led to the arrest of nine alleged drug users who told the police where they were getting their supply of shabu and marijuana.

"We have been watching over that compound for a long time now. We earlier caught mostly teenagers there, who all tested positive for drug use. That strengthened our suspicion that there were pot sessions inside the compound," said MPD chief, Senior Supt. Marietto Valerio.

The police later learned that the maintainers of the shabu mini-mart charged those who entered the compound through a six foot-high steel gate P5 each. They were charged another P10 if they wanted to rent a cubicle and P5 more for the use of drug paraphernalia.

"After you entered the gate, somebody would approach you and ask how much (drugs) you wanted to score. Then you would be led to a cubicle inside one of the houses where you could smoke pot," Sumulong said.

He added that those arrested would be put through inquest proceedings, where they would be charged with violation of Section 6 of Republic Act 9162 or the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002, which penalizes the maintenance of a drug den.

Yesterday's raid followed a series of raids in suspected drug dens around Metro Manila. A week ago, police and agents of the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency raided three houses in a crowded residential area in Pasay City, leading to the confiscation of P75,000 worth of shabu.

No reason to probe Singson yet, say police

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE POLICE YESTERDAY SAID there was no basis to probe Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson for his alleged involvement in the death of businessman Leonardo Umale.

Eastern Police District director Chief Supt. Charlemagne Alejandrino told the INQUIRER that they could not yet include Singson in the investigation.

"What would be our basis to investigate him? There is no formal complaint yet," Alejandrino said, adding that Clarissa, Umale's wife, has not given them a statement.

Alejandrino said they had approached Clarissa several times but she told investigators she would only talk to them in the presence of her lawyers.

Umale was shot dead on March 16 by four men in front of the Pearl Plaza Building in Pasig City.

Clarissa had tagged Singson as her husband's only enemy, an accusation Singson quickly denied. The governor said that were nine cases pending against Umale which could have earned the trader enemies.

Clarissa, meanwhile, vowed to continue all the court cases her husband had been pursuing, even if these business-related cases could have led to his death.

"The mastermind (of the killing) could be thinking I will keep quiet just because my husband is dead. But we will pursue all the cases. His death will be meaningful," she told reporters.

His family remains convinced the killing had something to do with Umale's business interests, as well as the cases he had filed against some people.

"Our lawyers are also getting death threats. So the killing must be connected to the cases," Clarissa said.

Umale family lawyer, Agnes Maranan, had said the trader and other businessmen had filed cases against "Singson's associates" over the ownership of Metrowalk, a restaurant strip on Meralco Avenue in Pasig City.

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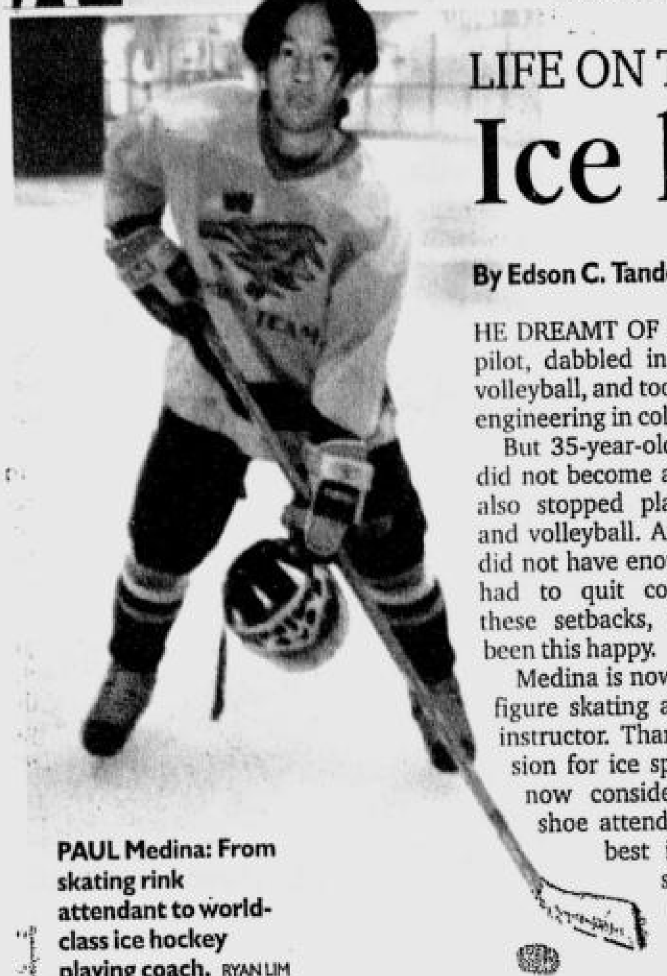

PAUL Medina: From skating rink attendant to world-class ice hockey playing coach. RYAN LIM

LIFE ON THE BALANCE

Ice hockey teacher one of Asia's best

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

HE DREAMT OF BECOMING A pilot, dabbled in baseball and volleyball, and took up electrical engineering in college.

But 35-year-old Paul Medina did not become a pilot. He has also stopped playing baseball and volleyball. And because he did not have enough money, he had to quit college. Despite these setbacks, he has never been this happy.

Medina is now a full-fledged figure skating and ice hockey instructor. Thanks to his passion for ice sports, his peers now consider this former shoe attendant one of the best ice hockey instructors in the country, even in Asia. "I love the sport. I work while enjoying myself at the same time," Medina told the INQUIRER.

Medina grew up in San Pedro, Laguna not knowing anything about ice sports. As a working student in Cabanatuan, Nueva Ecija, he found it difficult to finance his college studies so he stopped after three years.

In 1995, he tried his luck in the big city where he worked as a service crew member for an amusement center in SM Cubao. Hoping to be a bowling center attendant, he later applied at the SM Megamall in Mandaluyong City.

First time

Officials, however, referred him to the ice skating rink which was looking for a shoe attendant. He was also asked to try something he had never done before—ice skate. Surprisingly, Medina kept his balance on the ice and did not fall. He was hired, not knowing this would be the beginning of a decade-old love story with ice hockey.

As a shoe attendant, he would get the skates ready for customers and assisted them on the rink. Seeing students and the coaches do tricks on the rink got Medina more interested in the sport. He quickly learned figure skating.

TALES OF THE CITY

SM Megamall introduced ice hockey as a program in 1996, and Medina got to watch the game on television sports channels as other coaches were reviewing the sport. "I wanted to learn the game," Medina said. So when he heard about an opening for an ice-skating technician in Saudi Arabia, he grabbed the opportunity, thinking about the sport, not the work.

His job was to maintain the skating rink and to assist skaters. In his spare time, he would watch ice hockey coaches play. Dreaming of becoming a coach himself, he joined a game one time, even if he was intimidated by the tall, well-built players. "But the foreigners found it difficult to catch up with me. Because of my training as a figure skater, I was more flexible so I could skate much faster," Medina recalled.

The foreigners, who lived in countries with a winter season, started to depend on him. "My dream came true," said Medina who honed his ice hockey skills in Saudi Arabia.

Returning to the Philippines after eight months, he applied at SM Megamall in February 1998, this time as an ice hockey coach.

"I just wanted to learn ice hockey. That was my only target," Medina said. But the company policy was strict: He was limited to assisting customers for two months.

Moving like a pro

Medina had no complaints. Sooner than he expected, coaches and students at the rink began to notice his superior moves while skating. "I was already playing with foreigners so when I came back, my pace was a lot quicker. I got used to more physical contact," he added.

After two months, he got what he had long dreamt of: He became an ice hockey instructor. His skills were quickly recognized and in November 1998, he formed a team to compete in a recreational ice hockey contest in Thailand. Medina called his team Manila Comets, composed of students aged 15 and below, to fit the Bantam Division competition. "But when we arrived in Thailand, we were surprised. The event was for the Men's Division," he recalled.

Best player

That meant his pupils would have to compete with adult players. Still, Medina and his team put up a good fight and finished second to Thailand, the host country. The following year, he won as Best Defensive Player in another competition in Thailand. "He is one of the recognized ice hockey coaches here in Asia because of his experiences here and abroad," SM Ice Skating Rinks assistant manager Joseph Santos told the INQUIRER.

That Medina also met his long-time partner Fatima in SM Megamall was a welcome bonus. Fatima is also a figure skating and ice hockey instructor.. They now have four children, all boys, three of whom are also ice skaters. "I want to put up an ice hockey team with my family as members," he said.

He has also competed in other countries like Malaysia, Singapore and Hong Kong. He and his team are scheduled to compete in Malaysia in May.

Sponsors wanted

Medina is also looking forward to ice sports becoming popular in a tropical country, though he admitted this dream would probably take longer to realize. "The sport is very expensive. When we go to competitions abroad, only those who can afford the fare could join. We don't have a lot of sponsors yet," he said.

"We have the skills. Filipino skaters have the natural style and grace," Santos added, optimistic that Filipino ice sports players would make it big in international contests.

Take it from Medina, a former shoe attendant transformed into a world class ice hockey player by his determination and his love for the game.

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Five years ago, Engr. Gregorio Sanchez Jr. set out to look for a formula that would extinguish bacteria that cause bad odor in pigpens. Little did he know that this would pave the way for more experiments and, finally, for Lacto Bacillus Pafi Techno Resources Corp., maker of LactoPafi, the liquid health supplement that continuously helps countless of individuals fight their diseases.

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Because of his ingenuity, persistence, and the effectiveness of his product, Lacto Pafi Probiotic Bacteria, Engr. Sanchez was chosen by the Ernst & Young The SGV Foundation, Inc. as Innovation Entrepreneur of the Year 2006 awardee for the Innovation Entrepreneur category. He was chosen from among 20 nominees.

Ernst & Young lauds Engr. Sanchez for being "An individual who created a new product or service or someone who has applied an innovative technology, business solution or approach that resulted in improving business process or growing the company." It also cited Engr. Sanchez's persistence even when he lacked the hi-tech machinery for his study.

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Pope appeals for Christian convert facing death sentence

VATICAN CITY—POPE BENEDICT HAS WRITten to Afghan President Hamid Karzai asking that charges be dropped against a man facing a possible death sentence for converting from Islam to Christianity, the Vatican said on Saturday.

The appeal was sent in the Pope's name by Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Angelo Sodano, who told him that the Pope's appeal was inspired by "profound human compassion" and by the "firm belief in the dignity of human life and by respect for every person's freedom of conscience and religion."

President George W. Bush and several other Western leaders have expressed grave concern at the threatened death penalty for Abdur Rahman, 40. Sharia (Islamic law), on which Afghan law is partly based, stipulates death for apostasy.

"I am certain, Mr. President, that the dropping of the case against Mr. Rahman would bestow great honor upon the Afghan people and would raise a chorus of admiration in the international community," the letter said.

The Afghan constitution says "no law can be contrary to the sacred religion of Islam" but also says it will abide by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which enshrines freedom of religion.

Sodano told Karzai in the letter that dropping charges "would then contribute in a most significant way to our common mission to foster mutual understanding and respect among the world's different religions and cultures."

International pressure on Afghanistan to respect Rahman's religious freedom and release him from jail has been met in Afghanistan by calls for him to be tried under Islamic law and executed, and a threat of rebellion if the government frees him.

The controversy threatens to drive a wedge between Afghanistan and the Western backers who secure and finance the country. Rahman's trial is due to start in a few days.
Reuters

Russia denies US charge that it spied for Saddam

MOSCOW—RUSSIA'S SVR FOREIGN INTELligence service Saturday denied a Pentagon report that Moscow gave Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein intelligence from inside the US military command on US troop movements after the 2003 invasion of Iraq.

"It is not the first time that such unfounded accusations have been made against Russian intelligence," SVR spokesperson Boris Labussov said.

"We don't believe it is necessary to comment on such wild imaginings."

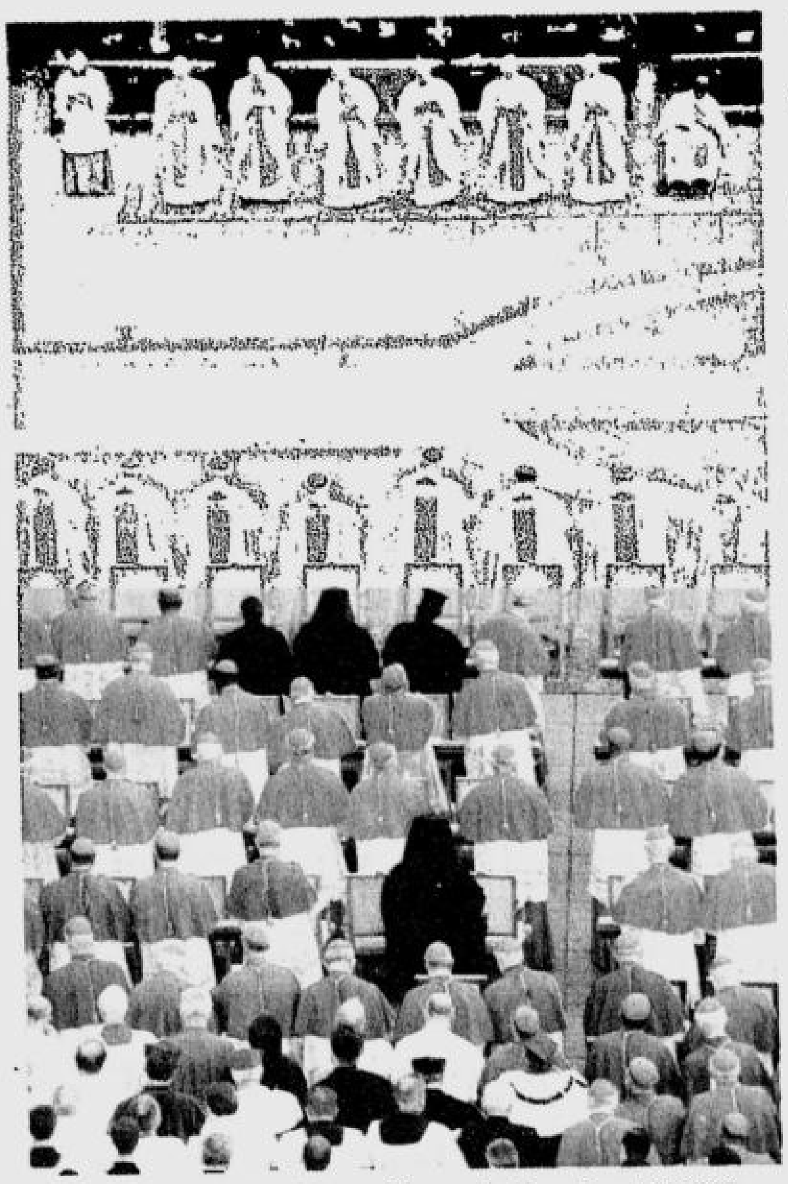
The Pentagon report, published Friday and citing Iraqi documents, said the Russians collected information from sources in the US Central Command in Doha, Qatar, which it then delivered to Saddam.

One of the documents, a report from the foreign ministry to Saddam dated April 2, 2003, contained information passed on by the Russian ambassador, Vladimir Titorenko.

Titorenko escaped injury from US weapons fire as he was traveling to Syria with several other diplomats. Four people, including the ambassador's driver, were wounded in the incident.

The Itar-Tass news agency said Titorenko is now based in Algiers.

The Ria Novosti agency quoted a military source as describing the US report as "revenge by the US side" for the "firm position" taken by Moscow in opposing the US intervention in Iraq.
AFP



PRELATES pray during a Mass celebrated by Pope Benedict XVI in honor of newly appointed cardinals in St. Peter's Square, March 25 in the Vatican. The Pope installed 15 new cardinals, making his first selection of those who will one day choose his successor. AFP

Pontiff gives golden rings to new cardinals in final rites of first consistory

By Nicole Winfield

VATICAN CITY—POPE BENEDICT XVI gave golden rings to each of his 15 new cardinals on Saturday during a Mass on the steps of St. Peter's Basilica.

Tens of thousands of people—family, friends and supporters of the new "princes" of the church—packed the square, waving flags from the cardinals' 11 homelands and toting banners adorned with their pictures.

During the Mass, Benedict placed a golden ring embossed with a crucifix and engraved with Benedict's papal seal on each man's right hand. The Pope said the ring was a symbol of the cardinals' commitment and fidelity to the church, like the nuptial rings exchanged by a bride and groom.

"May your acceptance of the ring be for you a renewal of your 'Yes,' your 'Here I am,' addressed both to the Lord Jesus who chose you and constituted you, and to his holy Church which you are called to serve with the love of a spouse," he said.

The Pope and new cardinals wore golden vestments that fluttered in the breeze.

A day earlier, the steps of St. Peter's Basilica were awash in red as Benedict embraced the scarlet-robed cardinals and placed crimson hats on their heads—symbols of their elite rank and willingness to shed blood for the Church.

During Friday's consistory to formally elevate the 15 new cardinals, tears welled up in Benedict's eyes as he gripped the shoulders of Cardinal Stanislaw Dziwisz, the Polish prelate who faithfully served his predecessor, John Paul II, for 40 years.

Benedict referred to John Paul during his homily Saturday, noting that his predecessor was particularly devoted to Mary, the mother of Christ. Saturday is the Feast of the Annunciation—when, according to the Bible, an angel told Mary that she would bear a child.

Benedict recalled that John Paul had attributed his survival of the 1981 assassination attempt in St. Peter's to Mary's protection.

"In memory of that tragic event, he had a mosaic of the Virgin placed high up in the Apostolic Palace, looking down over St. Peter's Square, so as to accompany the key moments and the daily unfolding of his long reign," he said.

In his first consistory, Benedict selected churchmen from Spain, Slovenia, South Korea and France to join the elite College of Cardinals that will choose the German Pontiff's successor.

He invited the entire college—193 in all—to lunch with him in a Vatican auditorium after Saturday's Mass.

Cardinal Sean O'Malley, who was brought in to clean up the Church in Boston after a major sex abuse scandal, was among them, along with William Levada, formerly the archbishop of San Francisco and Portland, Oregon. Levada took over Benedict's old job as prefect of the Congregation of the Doctrine of the Faith, the Vatican's chief doctrinal watchdog.

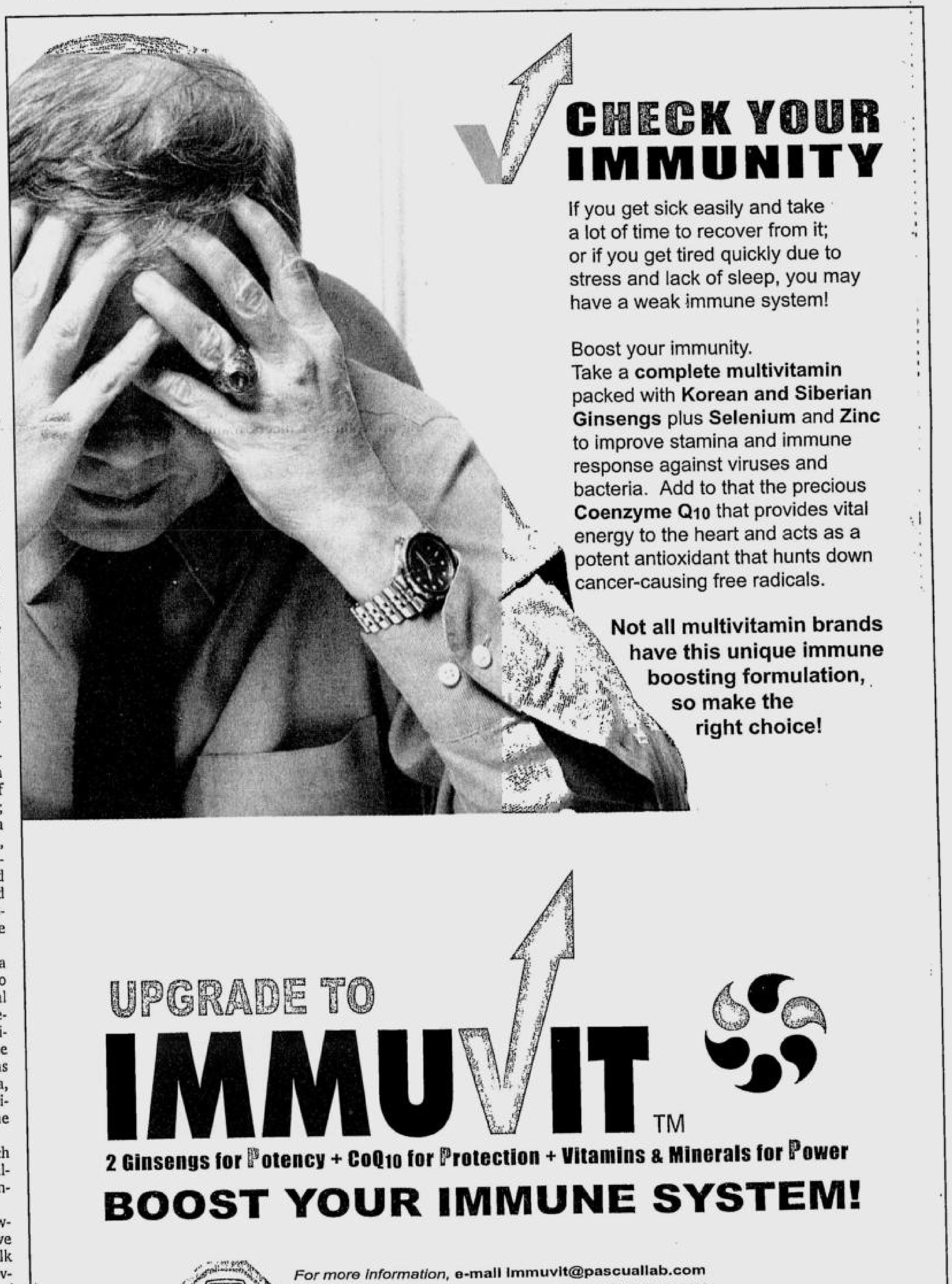
The new cardinals also included Hong Kong Bishop Joseph Zen, an outspoken champion of religious freedom in China; Archbishop Jorge Liberato Urosa Savino of Caracas, Venezuela, who has sought to reduce tensions between the Church and President Hugo Chavez; and Archbishop Gaudencio B. Rosales of Manila, Philippines, the Catholic bastion of Asia.

"The Holy Father loves China and I hope to be of service to him," the Hong Kong cardinal told The Associated Press at a reception Friday for the new cardinals in the frescoed rooms of the Apostolic Palace. The Pope has been reaching out to China, which broke relations with Vatican after the Communists came to power.

Urosa Savino said the Church was using persistence in its dealing with the Caracas government.

"The path that we are following is with the persistence we employ every time that we talk with government officers and every time that we raise the issue of politics in Venezuela," he told AP Television News.

Thousands stood in line to greet the new cardinals after the consistory.
AP



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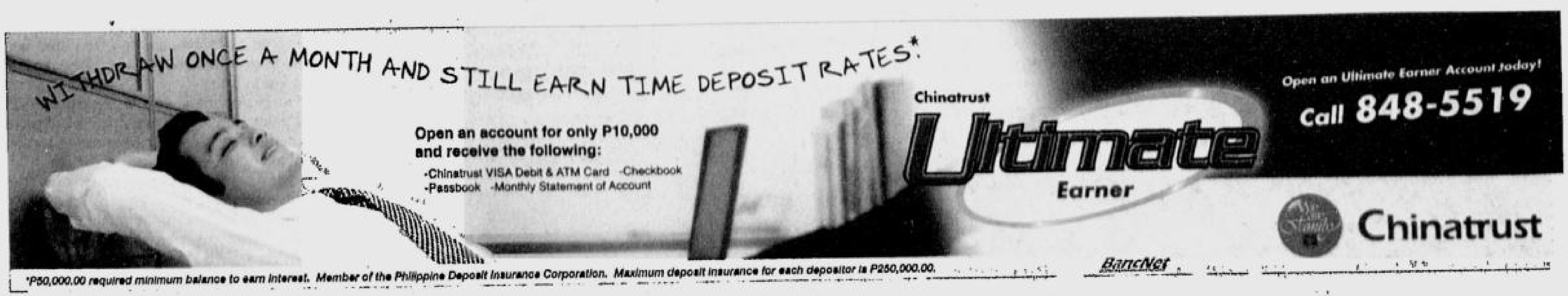

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The WORLD

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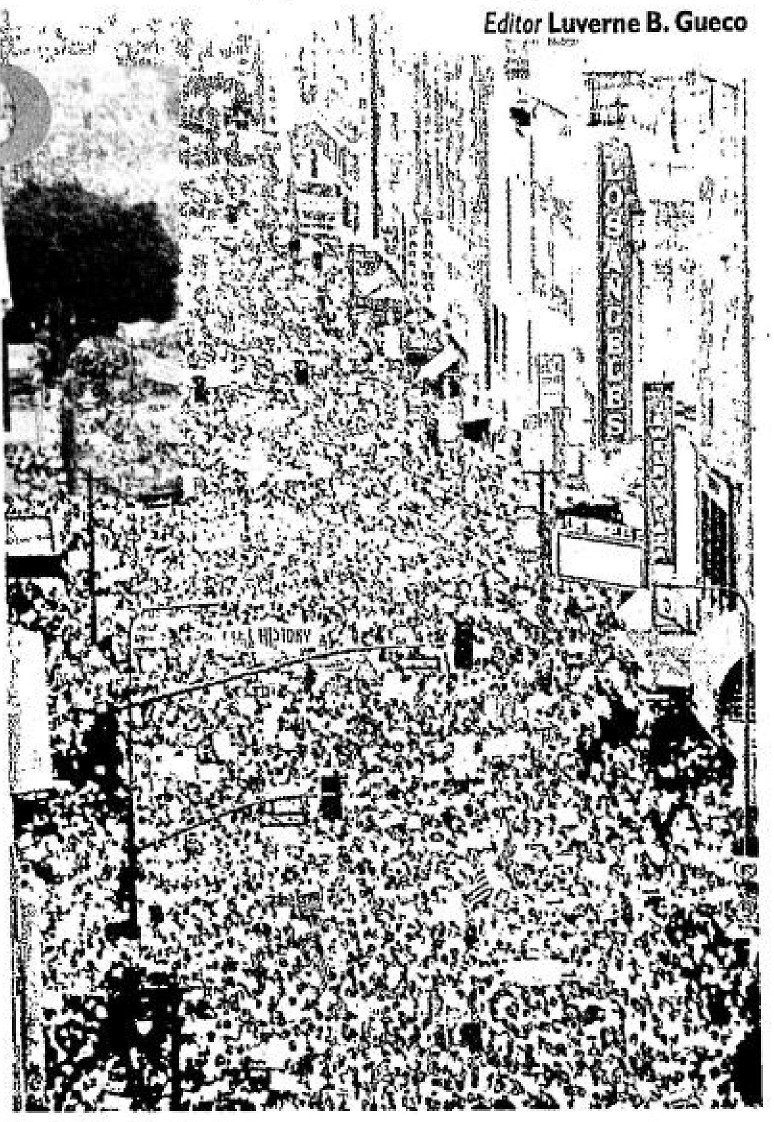

THOUSANDS of demonstrators march along the streets of downtown Los Angeles to protest legislation that cracks down against illegal immigrants March 25. REUTERS

Bigger second-day rally

Half million in LA slam immigration crackdown

LOS ANGELES—IMMIGRATION RIGHTS ADVOcates more than 500,000 strong marched in downtown Los Angeles, demanding that Congress abandon attempts to make helping illegal immigrants a crime and to build more walls along the border.

The massive demonstration Saturday, one of half dozen around the US in recent days, came as President George W. Bush prodded Republican congressional leaders to give some illegal immigrants a chance to work legally in the US under certain conditions.

Saturday's march in Los Angeles was the largest in a series of demonstrations across the country. Police Cmdr. Louis Gray Jr. said aerial helicopters estimated the crowd.

Many marchers wore white shirts to symbolize peace and waved US flags. Some carried the flags of Mexico and other countries, and wore them as capes.

Elger Aloy, 26, a premed student, pushed a stroller with his 8-month-old son at Saturday's Los Angeles march and called the legislation "inhumane."

"Everybody deserves the right to a better life," he said.

The US House of Representatives has passed legislation that would make it a felony to be in the US illegally, impose new penalties on employers who hire illegal immigrants and erect fences along one-third of the US-Mexican border.

The Senate is to begin debating the proposals on Tuesday.

President George W. Bush on Saturday called for legislation that does not force America to choose between being a welcoming society and a lawful one.

"America is a nation of immigrants, and we're also a nation of laws," Bush said in his weekly radio address about the emotional immigration issue that has driven a wedge into his party.

Bush sides with business leaders who want legislation to let some of the estimated 12 million undocumented immigrants stay in the country and work for a set period of time. Others, including Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist, say national security concerns should drive immigration reform.

"They say we are criminals. We are not criminals," said Salvador Hernandez, 43, of Los Angeles, a resident alien who came to the United States illegally from El Salvador 14 years ago and worked as truck driver, painter and day laborer.

Francisco Flores, 27, a wood flooring installer from Santa Clarita who is a former illegal immigrant, said, "We want to work legally, so we can pay our taxes and support the country, our country."

In Denver, police said over 50,000 people gathered downtown at Civic Center Park next to the Capitol to urge the state Senate to reject a resolution supporting a ballot issue that would deny many government services to illegal immigrants in Colorado.

Elsa Rodriguez, 30, a trained pilot who came to Colorado in 1999 from Mexico to look for work, said she just wants to be considered equal. *AP*

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BUSH in downtown Wheeling, W.Va. AP

Bush charms as he makes case for Iraq

WHEELING, WEST VIRGINIA—NO MATTER his audience, President George W. Bush is drawing on his plainspoken manner in freewheeling venues to defend his Iraq strategy.

Alternately serious and joking, charming and disarming, Bush is trying to counter congressional election-year critics and reverse a precipitous slide in his approval ratings and public support for the war.

In Wheeling on Wednesday, the fifth day in a row Bush devoted public remarks to Iraq, the president bantered with the locals, his shoulders bouncing up and down as they do when he's pleased with his own jokes. Then he brought down the house with his trademark I-won't-back-down pledge.

"Let me put it to you this way: If I didn't think we'd succeed, I'd pull our troops out," Bush said. More than 2,000 supporters—including many active-duty military and their families—leapt from their seats and filled the gilded Capitol Music Hall with wild applause.

"I cannot look mothers and dads in the eye, I can't ask this good Marine to go into harm's way if I didn't believe, one, we're going to succeed, and, two, it's necessary for the security of the United States," Bush said.

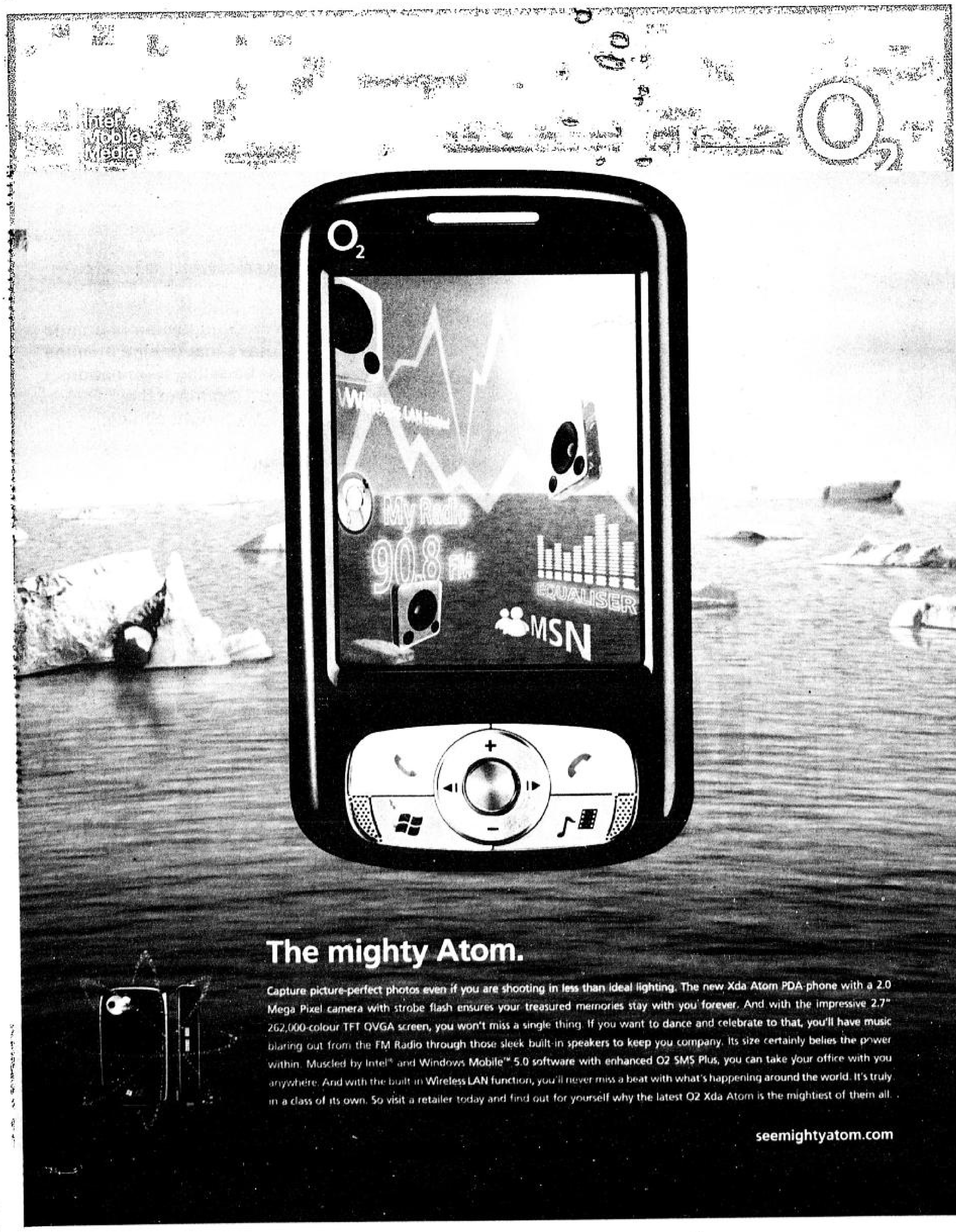
Beginning with a speech Monday in Washington, and with more planned to come, the president wants to convince Americans not only that there is reason for optimism about Iraq's future but that the situation now is better than the daily reports of strife make it appear.

The crowd in Wheeling needed little convincing. Another standing ovation was prompted by a woman who asked Bush what could be done to keep the press from ignoring progress in Iraq.

"Our major media don't want to portray the good," she said. "If the American people could see it, there would never be another negative word about this conflict."

Bush declined the opportunity to tell the media what to publish.

"You're asking me to say something in front of all the cameras here. Help over there, will you?" he joshed. "Just got to keep talking. Word of mouth." *AP*



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ALASKA forward Nic Belasco forces his way through a phalanx of Purefoods defenders during the game yesterday. RYAN LIM

Pingris hot as Giants crush lethargic Aces

By June Navarro

THERE WAS NO NEED FOR Marc Pingris to impose himself in the critical second half. His early heroics proved enough.

Purefoods Chunkee took control behind the exploits of Pingris in the first half, then drew ample firepower from James Yap as the Giants drubbed the Alaska Aces, 91-73, last night in the Gran Matador Brandy-PBA Philippine Cup at the Araneta Coliseum.

Pingris scored all his 15 points in the first half, pulled down a handful of important rebounds, swatted away three shots and stole the leather twice as the Giants took a 46-34 lead at halftime.

The Giants then turned to Yap, who responded with 12 points in the third quarter that transformed the anticipated thriller into a sleeper.

The Giants improved to a second-running 3-2 record in a tie with the San Miguel Beermen. The off-form Aces dropped to 3-3.

"We played solid defense from start to finish," said Purefoods coach Ryan Gregorio. "But it was Marc (Pingris) who started our onslaught and James (Yap) got his rhythm in the second half."

In the second game, Jimmy Alapag fired 20 points, including 13 in the pivotal third period, as Talk 'N Text halted Coca-Cola's run with a 100-82 rout.

The Phone Pals upped their record to 3-2 while the Tigers dropped their first match in the tournament and slipped to 4-1.

The scores:

First Game

PUREFOODS 91—J. Yap 22, Pingris 15, Raymundo 14, Tejada 12, R. Yap 8, Limpot 6, Castillo 6, Artadi 3, Yee 3, Billones 2, Gamboa 0, Evangelista 0.

ALASKA 73—Belasco 21, Hugnatan 12, Allado 11, Dela Cruz 8, Cariaso 7, Cortez 5, Bajar 3, Thoss 2, Wilson 2, Laure 2.

Quarters: 21-18, 46-34, 70-54, 91-73.

Second Game

TALK 'N TEXT 100—Alapag 20, Carey 17, Cardona 13, Avenido 11, Meneses 10, Taulava 10, Ferriols 8, Miller 7, Juinio 4, Viloria 0, Cantonjos 0.

COCA-COLA 82—Peek 15, Abarrientos 13, Antonio 12, Reavis 10, Singson 8, Miranda 7, Arigo 7, Wainwright 4, Mamaril 2, Morano 2, Francisco 2.

Quarters: 26-13, 48-39, 75-64, 100-82

BAP to pursue readmission bid, says embattled sec-gen

By Jasmine W. Payo

LIM: Even without me

ALTHOUGH UNSURE of his own fate, detained Basketball Association of the Philippines secretary general Graham Lim yesterday said that the BAP will continue to fight for readmission to the Philippine Olympic Committee.

"(My detention) will not affect anything," Lim told the INQUIRER from his Bureau of Immigration detention cell at Camp Bagong Diwa in Bicutan, Taguig.

"As an organization, the BAP is intact. Graham is not the BAP, I'm only part of the BAP structure. We have more than 300,000 members. We have the highest number of membership in the POC. That's why we have to fight for it."

Lim said lawyers are working on his case, referring to his arrest Friday by agents of the BI, which has long recommended his deportation as a citizen of the Republic of China (Taiwan).

The POC is set to seek Fiba's recognition of

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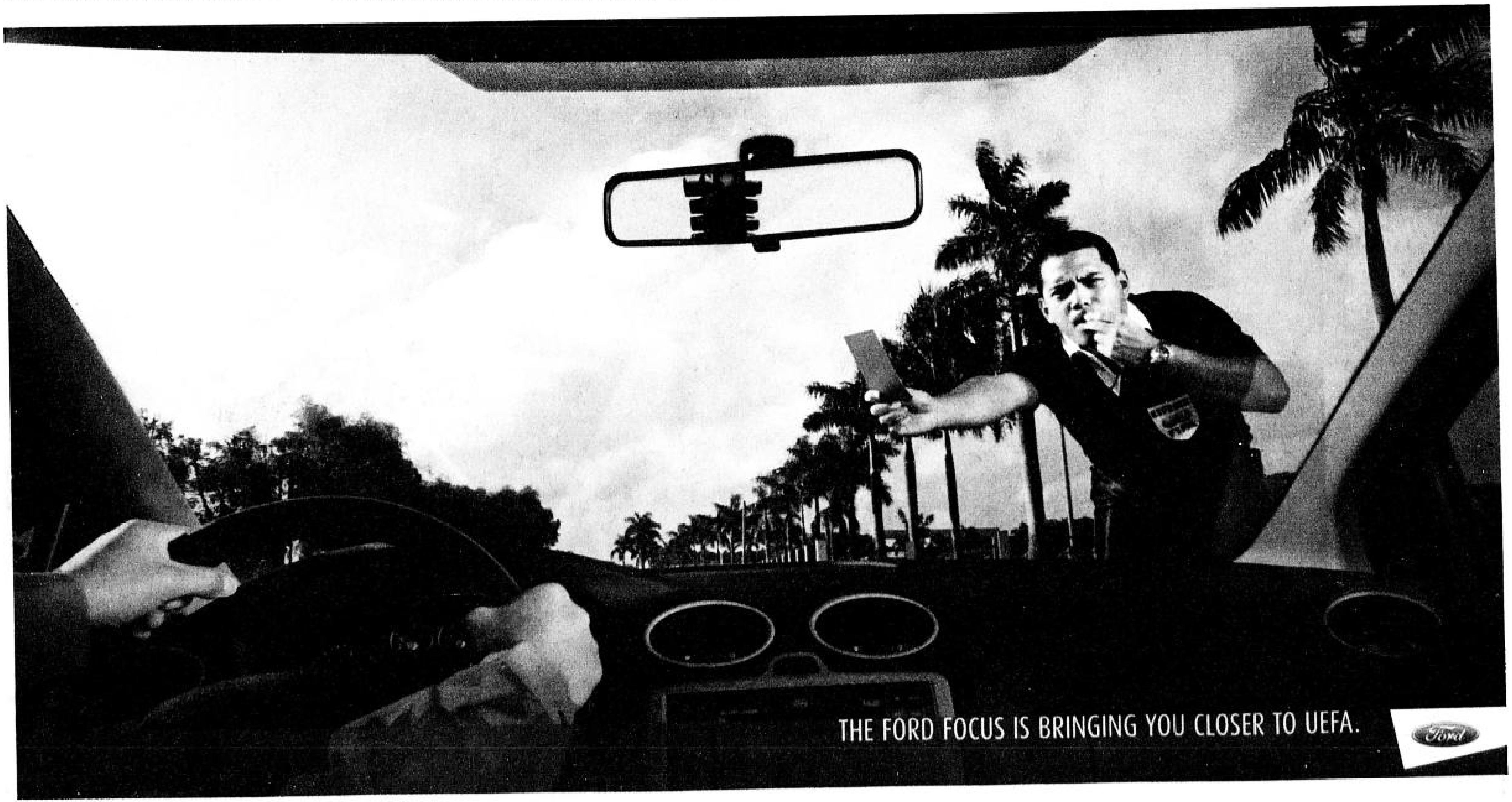

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Ames survives scary day at Sawgrass

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

Recah Trinidad will resume his column on Wednesday.

PONTE VEDRA BEACH, FLORIDA—Stephen Ames took on the Sawgrass course at full strength and finished a grueling round with a rare smile, surviving with a 2-under 70 to take a one-shot lead in The Players Championship on Saturday.

Ames didn't do anything spectacular down the stretch. All the Canadian did was keep it simple, the best way to survive the notorious TPC at Sawgrass that crushed the hopes of Arron Oberholser, constantly fooled Tiger Woods and slapped around anyone who made the slightest mistake.

When the debris was cleared away, Ames was at 9-under 207 and one shot clear of Vijay Singh and Sergio Garcia.

At this rate, the winner of the US PGA Tour's richest event might be the last player standing.

Singh played his final 10 holes without a bogey for a 70, making him a serious threat to end a string of six months without a victory in the US tour.

Garcia missed a 2-foot par putt on the 13th and was on the ropes until he found his legs over the treacherous closing holes and wound up with 70. *AP*

BOXING HEROES

WBC light flyweight champion Brian Viloria (left) and people's-ch Manny Pacquiao flaunt their latest achievement during the sixth Flash Elorde boxing awards night at the Dusit Hotel. Viloria recei Elorde Golden Belt while Pacquiao was named Boxer of the Year.

BAP to pursue readmission bid . . .

From page A29

Pilipinas Basketball—the new cage body backed by the PBA, PBL, UAAP and the NCAA—as a replacement for the BAP, which was expelled by the local Olympic body last year.

POC media bureau chief Joey Romasanta said Lim's arrest is not a matter of concern for the local Olympic body.

"It's something unfortunate, but the case is private and personal to Graham Lim," said Romasanta.

The BAP has said that the best way to lift the Fiba suspension on the country is to incorporate the major stakeholders into a restructured BAP.

"Nothing will change as far as our search for truth, fairness and justice is concerned," said BAP president Joey Lina. "Lim is not a pillar in the BAP, but it doesn't mean we're withdrawing our support to him. However, we should be more united and stand on our own."

The Fiba banned the Philippines from all its tournaments in the wake of the POC expulsion of the BAP. The world body later forged a Memorandum of Understanding with the POC calling for the five major stakeholders to form a new group which would replace the BAP.

Jainul takes 2 titles in Basilan

ISABELA, BASILAN—Alkhadi Jainul downed Omar Farouk Sangrula, 6-2, 6-1, in the boys' 12-under and then edged Zerdni Zaide, 6-3, 6-4, in the 14-under play over the weekend to capture two titles in the 2006 Milo Junior Tennis Cup and Regional Workshop at the Basilan Tennis Club. Jainul shared the limelight with Dudik Salip, who survived Macmac Zaide, 6-2, 5-7, 10-4, for the unisex 10-under crown; Joenillo Gabriel, who whipped Zerdni, 6-4, 6-3, for the boys' 16-under title; and Alex Hambre, who stopped Jay Zaide, 6-3, 6-2, for the boys' 18-under plum of the tournament organized by CTW and supported by Prince equipment and Adidas. Other double winners were Kylie Gacho, who defeated Shilou Hugo twice to bag the girls' 12-under and 14-under titles; and Lanie Enriquez, who routed Bhea Alkala, 6-0, 6-2, for the girls' 16-under plum; and Ten-ten Ong, 6-1, 6-0, for the girls' 18-under title. Project director Judge Kaudri Jainul and club head Totie Latip awarded the medals to the winners.

Jobo 5-cock on in Makati

A BANNER CROWD IS expected when cockfighting big shots collide today in the Jobo 5-Cock Derby at the Makati Coliseum, with B-Meg Derby Ace as sponsor. The one-day hackfest among 45 participants features more than 100 fights, said host Lito Orillaza of WTJ Sports and Amusement Corp. Gunning for top honors are Rudy Albano, Mayor Nene Aguilar, boxing hero Manny Pacquiao, former Sen. Ramon Revilla, Mayor Eddie Alarilla, Max Roxas, Pepe Tan, Boy Royo, Rep. Baby Asistio, William Co, Elwin Javelosa, retired Col. Nicetas Katigbak, Philip Chiongbian, Philip Menez, Efren Canlas, among others. For inquiries, call 896-3545 or 895-6475.

80 fights up in SJC derby

MORE THAN 80 FIGHTS are on tap in a special 3-cock derby sponsored by Sagupaan Complexor 3000 today at the San Juan Coliseum. The first fight is set at 5 p.m. Hosted by the SJC management, the derby stakes a cash pot of P200,000. Entry fee is P5,500. Slated this Wednesday at the same venue is a 4-cock derby with SJC pit manager Pete Rivera as host. The Fastest Win One-Cock Ulutan comes next next Monday. For inquiries, call 725-6563 or 725-5369.

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RODEL ROTONI

Rain or Shine, Toyota Otis in winning starts

GAMES TOMORROW (*San Andres Gym*)
2 p.m.—TeleTech vs Magnolia
4 p.m.—Granny Goose vs Montaña

By Jasmine W. Payo

RAIN OR SHINE TURNED TO ITS BIG MEN in repulsing Harbour Centre, 70-64, yesterday at the start of its PBL Unity Cup campaign at the La Salle Green Hills Gym.

Marvin Ortiguerra and Junjun Cabatu pumped in 16 points apiece as the defending champions matched the first-game victories by Granny Goose and Montaña.

Toyota Otis also got going on a winning note, scoring seven points in the final minute in a 77-73 victory over Hapee-PCU.

Ronjay Enrile fired a key three-pointer with 43.6 seconds left to give the Elasto Painters a 63-57 cushion, after Harbour Centre had threatened within three points.

Joe Devance delivered 22 points for Toyota Otis—including the marginal basket in the last 10 seconds—and grabbed 12 rebounds.

"Our system revolves around the perimeter guys, they created situations for our big men," said Sparks coach Louie Alas, who commended Boyet Bautista's key assist to Devance in the crucial play.

Hapee-PCU charged to a 73-70 lead after a 10-0 run, but Aaron Aban hit a triple to knot the contest at 73, going into the final minute.

Devance's low-post basket lifted the Sparks, 75-73. Bautista capped the win by nailing his two free throws in the closing seconds.

The scores:

First Game

TOYOTA OTIS 77—Devance 22, Aban 13, Rodriguez 11, Bautista 7, Aldave 6, Oreta 6, Coronel 5, Cabahug 3, Casio 2, Larong 1, Andaya 1, Daa 0.

HAPEE-PCU 73—Castro 25, Espinas 15, Moreño 9, Baculi 7, Canlas 6, Sanz 5, Belga 4, Razon 2, Gonzales 0, Guevarra 0, Nallon 0, Solis 0, Garrido 0.

Quarters: 22-16, 40-35, 60-59, 77-73

Second Game

RAIN OR SHINE 70—Ortiguerra 16, Cabatu 16, Tan 10, Tangkay 9, Sta. Maria 5, Enrile 3, Reyes 4, Malabanan 2.

HARBOUR CENTRE 64—Araña 13, Yeo 9, Malerhofer 8, Tenorio 7, Gamboa 7, Reyes 5, Alonzo 5, Paterno 4, Chia 4, Mesina 2, Gaco 0, Lanete 0.

Quarters: 21-10, 33-37, 45-41, 70-64

Top Canadian hope leads rout of Pinoys

TOP SEED CANADIAN YOANN Re overwhelmed Filipino wild card Carlos Espedido, 6-0, 6-1, yesterday and led four big guns into the next round of qualifying in the Mitsubishi Lancer International Tennis Championships at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

Not one homegrown hope advanced as Leyan Moncera, Jose Lorenzo Opulencia, Christian Canlas, Akio Sy and Juan Fidel Regis fell to much superior foes.

Re, a semifinalist in the Genting ITF Juniors two weeks ago, will next meet Ukraine's Vladyslav Klymenko, who clobbered Spencer Feldman of the United States, 6-2, 6-3.

Second seed Zhou Zhouqing of China routed Moncera, 6-2, 6-0, to advance against Korean Cho Soong-jae, a 6-2, 6-3 winner over Israel's Jonathan Hadash, 6-2, 6-3.

No. 3 seed Canadian Jonathan David, fourth seed South African Ruan Roelopse, Briton Simon Childs and American Bradley Cox also earned second-round berths in this event supported by Accel, Traders Hotel and Wilson balls.

David blasted Opulencia, 6-0, 6-0, to set up a meeting with China's Bai Yan, who beat Japan's Yuki Matsuo, 6-3, 6-2.

Other matches: Roelopse d. Michael Thompson (South Africa), 6-4, 6-4; Choi Jae-won (South Korea) d. Canlas, 6-1, 6-0; Childs d. Tomer Hodorov (Israel), 6-3, 6-2; Hiroki Moriya (Japan) d. Sy, 6-0, 6-0; Cox d. Regis, 6-0, 6-1; Yin Xiaolong (China) d. James Munro (South Africa), 6-4, 6-2.

Castillo, Alcala win, gain q'finals

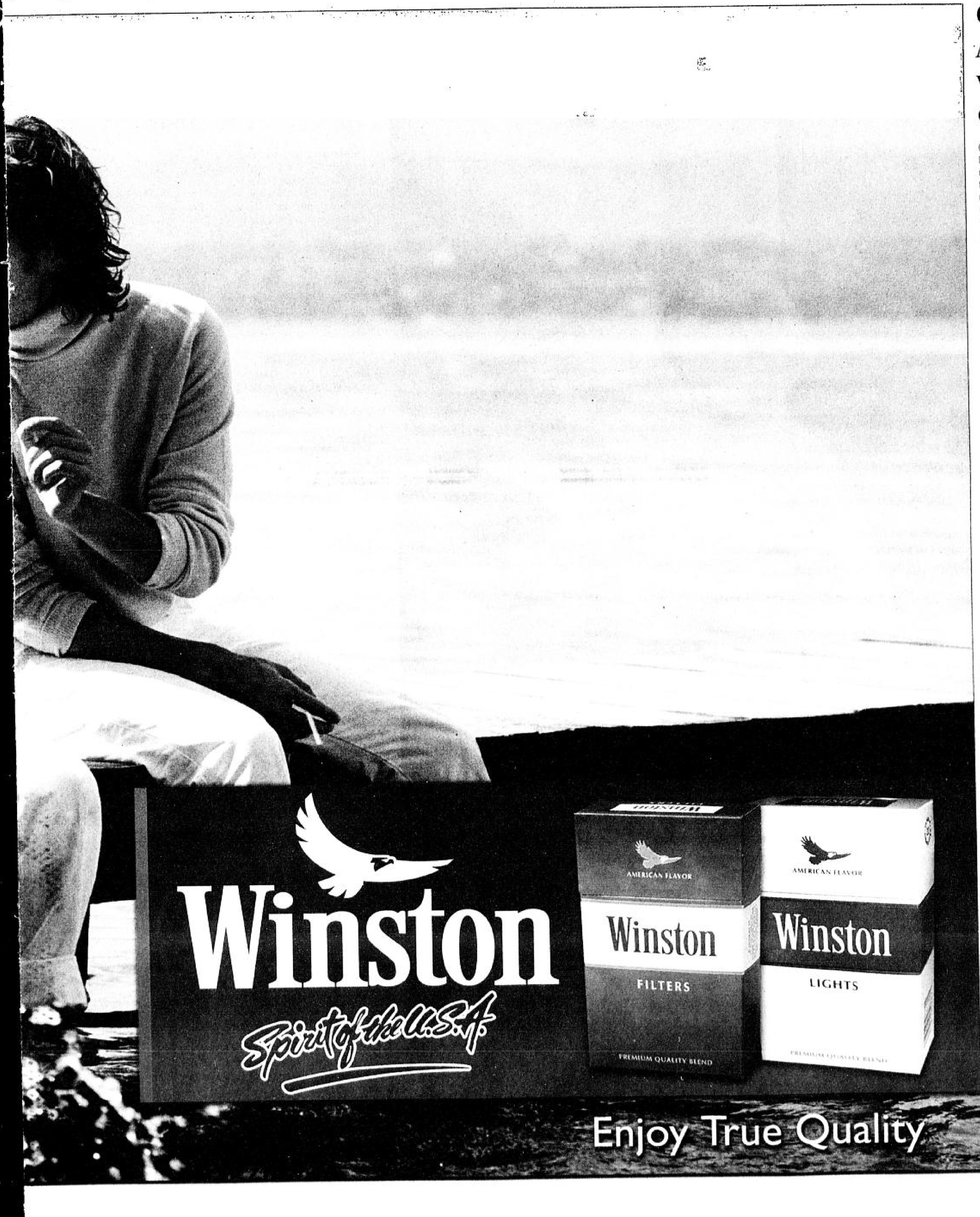
GELITA CASTILLO AND Malvinne Ann Alcala routed their respective foes to lead the quarterfinalists in the girls' 14-under division of the JVC Open Junior Badminton Championships at SM Megamall over the weekend. Castillo of Centro Atletico blasted Dorothy Griarte, 21-8, 21-2, to arrange a clash with Michelle Cruz, the Woodrose School mainstay who held off Arabelle Lacorte of Sports Zone, 21-17, 21-9. Alcala, the player to watch in the 12-under play, bundled out Vicka Dorado of RAQ4, 21-6, 21-11, to set up a duel with Krisnin Yang, the top bet of Whackers Badminton Court who bested Tracy Alagao, 21-15, 21-11. Others who advanced in the tournament, sponsored by JVC (Phils.), Inc. and organized by IMG, were Kathleen Balatbat, Abegail Garcia, Jessalam Sampurna and Pia Fabros. Balatbat survived Suchika Kumar of RAQ4, 21-14, 21-14; Garcia defeated Cristine Ignacio, 21-10, 21-10; Sampurna routed Creza Songsong, 21-3, 21-10; and Fabros beat Kiara Castelo, 21-15, 21-9.

Sta. Elena Cup boon to caddies

CADDIES STAND TO get more benefits from the proceeds of the Sta. Elena Cup member-guest invitational which marks its 10th edition from March 30 to April 2. Funds raised from the Cup raffle will be used to subsidize medical insurance for the caddie force, courtesy of giant firm Intellicare, on top of a 24-hour accident insurance coverage provided to them by Aviva. The New Canaan Insurance is taking the lead in this scheme. "We're making sure that our caddies get the best protection," said Sta. Elena president Edward Tiu. The raffle is one of the highlights of the awards rites. Two lucky winners will get payouts of P500,000 and P300,000 cash.

'Fearless' set at Metrowalk

THE MIXED MARTIAL art event Fearless Fighting Championships (FFC) returns on center stage on April 7 with its second qualifier at the Metrowalk in Ortigas Center, Pasig City. A banner field is expected in the tourney, according to FFC promoter and organizer Alex Lopez. Admission is free. Fight time starts at 8 p.m. The FFC, like the Ultimate Fighting Championships in the US, uses an octagon cage.



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Clippers breach 40-win plateau

CLIPPERS forward Vladimir Radmanovic (right) elevates to dunk against the Wizards' Calvin Booth. REUTERS

LOS ANGELES—ELTON BRAND HAD 32 points and nine rebounds, Sam Cassell scored 26 points and the Los Angeles Clippers routed the Washington Wizards, 116-101, on Saturday for their 40th victory of the NBA season.

Chris Kaman added 21 points and 13 rebounds for the Clippers, who reached the 40-win mark for only the third time in the last 27 seasons and the first time since 1992-93 under Larry Brown. The franchise record is 49 in 1974-75, and Los Angeles can tie that mark by going 9-5 for the rest of the way.

In Atlanta, Dirk Nowitzki scored 27 points to help the Dallas Mavericks to a 98-83 rout of the Hawks.

In Salt Lake City, Mike Bibby scored 24 points to help the Sacramento Kings hold off the Utah Jazz, 91-89, and put some more distance between the Kings and the Jazz in the race for the eighth playoff spot in the Western Conference.

In Phoenix, Shawn Marion scored 21 points and grabbed 14 rebounds to help the Suns trash the Denver Nuggets, 107-96, in a showdown of division leaders. AP

● **NBA ON TV:**

SOLAR SPORTS—LA Clippers vs Portland (10 a.m. live, 8 p.m. replay)

RPN-9—San Antonio vs Seattle (7:30 p.m. delayed telecast)

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Who will head Pilipinas Basketball?

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

SAYING IT IS A SOUND SUGgestion, many are batting for former Sen. Robert Jaworski to head Pilipinas Basketball, the new and unified cage organization that is seeking to regain the country's membership in the international basketball federation (Fiba.)

"Millions of sports-loving Filipinos will surely be proud to see Jaworski lead the country not on the playing court but in the halls of Fiba."

Fiba suspended the Philippines last year after the Philippine Olympic Committee expelled the Fiba-recognized Basketball Association of the Philippines. However, Fiba said the Philippines could return to its fold following a Memorandum of Understanding forged between the POC and Fiba which calls for five major stakeholders (PBA, PBL, UAAP, NCAA and former Sen. Joey Lina, president of the BAP) to form a new organization, in this case, Pilipinas Basketball. The group is set to be admitted as the newest member of the local Olympic family during the POC general assembly meeting tomorrow.

Jaworski, who turned 60 last March 8, is popularly known as the "Living Legend" of Philippine basketball. He owns a remarkable basketball record playing in the now-defunct Manila Industrial Commercial Athletic Association (Micaa) and the Philippine Basketball Association for more than three decades.

He quit the PBA when he was already 52 years old, "the oldest man ever," according to tireless contributor Paul Mortel, "to play pro basketball anywhere in the world."

He was not only a popular player (particularly for crowd favorite Barangay Ginebra) but a topnotch coach as well, winning four titles in the PBA and a silver medal for the Philippine team in the 1990 Asian Games in Beijing.

Other rumored possible Pilipinas Basketball heads are PBA moguls Manny Pangilinan, Henry Cojuangco, George Chua, Wilfred Uytengsu, Bert Lina and Buddy Encarnado. Earlier mentioned was Jun Bernardino, the first PBA commissioner who rose from the ranks.

* * *

NOT AN ALL-TIME GREAT: I'm sorry to Mrs. Laura Elorde, the Elorde clan, including Liza Elorde, for not being able to join them during Saturday's Elorde Awards Night. A previous commitment prevented me from going.

Manny Pacquiao is a good boxer, but an all-time great he is not. How can you call Pacquiao an "all-time great" when he is not even a legitimate champion of the World Boxing Council, the World Boxing Association or the International Boxing Federation?

Besides, he lacks moral values as a heavy bettor in cockfighting and billiards. Pacquiao is also facing a complaint filed in court by an alleged former lover, Joanna Rose Bacosa, who is seeking support for a 2-year-old son he allegedly fathered. Pacquiao neither confirmed nor denied that he is the father of the child. The boxer also declined to comment on his alleged romantic relationship with the woman, who had charged Pacquiao with violating the law protecting women and children from violence.

Pacquiao is not a role model to the Filipino youth. He's a hype created by the overwhelming majority of media, notably those boxing apologists in print. Pacquiao made boxing history after he beat Mexican legends Erik Morales and Marco Antonio Barrera. But he has yet to prove his true worth. If Pacquiao goes on to win a legitimate boxing title, then people will have no choice but to change their opinion and crown him as the greatest Filipino boxer of all time.

UCLA, LSU make Final 4

OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA—UCLA, the most storied program in US college basketball, is back in the Final Four along with Louisiana State University, which reached its first national semifinals in 20 years on Saturday. No. 2 seed UCLA defeated the top-seeded Memphis Tigers, 50-45, in the Oakland Regional final to earn its first Final Four appearance since the school's 1995 US championship. Meanwhile, LSU's homegrown Tigers beat Texas, 70-60, in overtime in the Atlanta Regional final. LSU will face UCLA next Saturday in the national semifinals in Indianapolis. In Sunday's regional finals, Villanova plays Florida, and George Mason meets Connecticut. Arron Afflalo scored 15 points as cold-shooting UCLA (31-6) won its 11th straight game in the lowest-scoring regional final since the shot-clock era began in 1986. AP

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Piolo Pascual in indie film

PIOLO Pascual in "Kagat" (left) and Gina Pareño in "Kubrador"

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

MORE MAINSTREAM STARS are doing independent movies.

In 2004, Marvin Agustin led the cast of Khavn's "Mondomanila: Institusyon ng Makata (Institute of Poets)," screened in the Cinemanila and Jakarta film festivals that same year and in the Rotterdam and Singapore film festivals the year after.

Last year, more stars including Eddie Garcia, Elizabeth Oropesa, Albert Martinez and Jaycee Parker were in Cinemalaya, Cinema One and Cinemanila entries and other independent efforts.

Michael de Mesa and Jaclyn Jose, who acted in Cinemalaya productions last year, are starring in Cesar Evangelista Buendia's "Pag-Asa ng Bayan"—a project supported by Jesuit Communications, about planting the seeds of corruption in young students.

This year, Piolo Pascual and Gina Pareño are jumping in the bandwagon.

Piolo Pascual plays a Huk leader in Cesar Hernando's short feature, "Kagat ng Dilim," which tackles *aswang* legends used in the psy-war tactics employed by the Central Intelligence Agency against Filipino subversives in the 1950s.

Joining Pascual in the 14-minute film are Yul Servo, Roeder, Mike Lloren and Jess Evardone.

"Piolo is one of the most cooperative actors I've worked with," Hernando told INQUIRER Entertainment. "My only problem was his busy schedule, but he was thoroughly professional."

Hernando said he would show it in the campus and film fest circuit.

"A preview is set next month at MyCinema in Greenbelt 3 Makati," he said. "It was sponsored by Fuji Keyser Mercantile and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts. I shot the movie using Fuji Eterna 400 film. I just finished post production at Roadrunner; printing will be by Opticolors."

Meanwhile, Sampaguita star Gina Pareño plays the title role in Jeffrey Jeturian's new full-length digital feature, "Kubrador (The Bet Collector)."

MLR Films' lawyer Joji Alonso, executive producer, said it is the role of a lifetime for the veteran actress known mostly for her comedic performances.

"It follows three days in the life of a *jueteng* collector," said Alonso. "Pareño shines in this movie and she's onscreen 95 percent of the time. Jeffrey was right… comedians really make good actors."

Pareño is supported by theater thespians Nanding Josef, Soliman Cruz and Fonz Deza. ABS-CBN director Johnny Manahan portrays a *jueteng* cashier.

Alonso put together a topnotch crew behind the camera. "Screenplay is by Joel Jover, with Armando "Bing" Lao as script supervisor. Director of photography is Boy Yniguez and production designer is Leo Abaya."

Alonso said she hopes to field "Kubrador" in festivals abroad.

> Gina Pareño is another mainstream star taking the brave new route

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DID YOU KNOW...

HOLLYWOOD newcomer Meiling Melançon, who plays Psylocke in "X Men 3: The Last Stand," was born in Manila in 1980. Of Chinese, Japanese and French descent, Melançon practices wushu. She has appeared on TV shows like "CSI: Vegas" and "Deadwood" and in movies like "Rush Hour 2" and "Double Take." She is set to star in Bigfoot Entertainment's upcoming dramatic thriller "Irreversi," which starts shooting with two casts and in two languages (English and Mandarin) in Hong Kong by the end of the month. Other "Irreversi" stars are Ian Bohen and Estella Warren.

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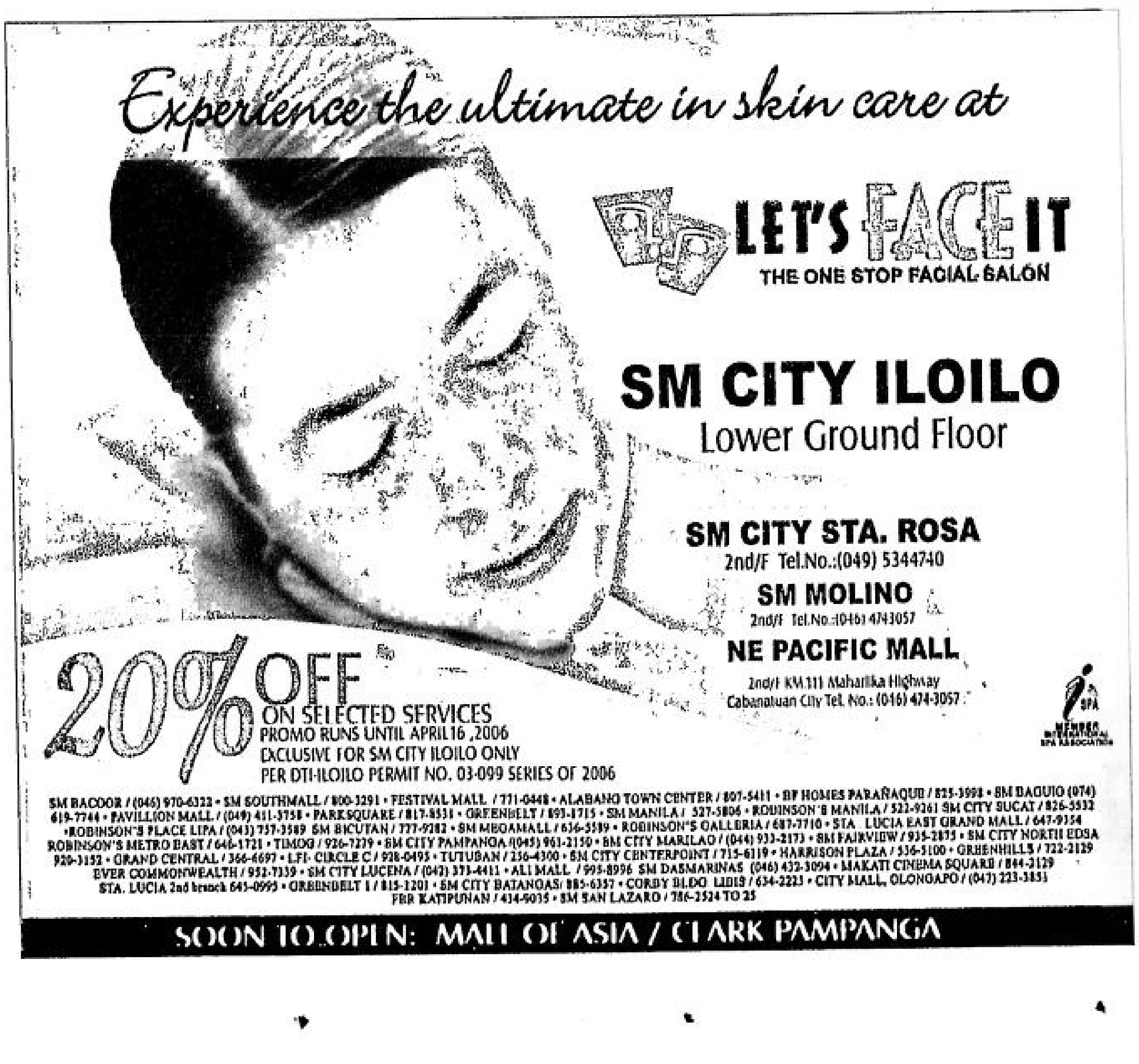

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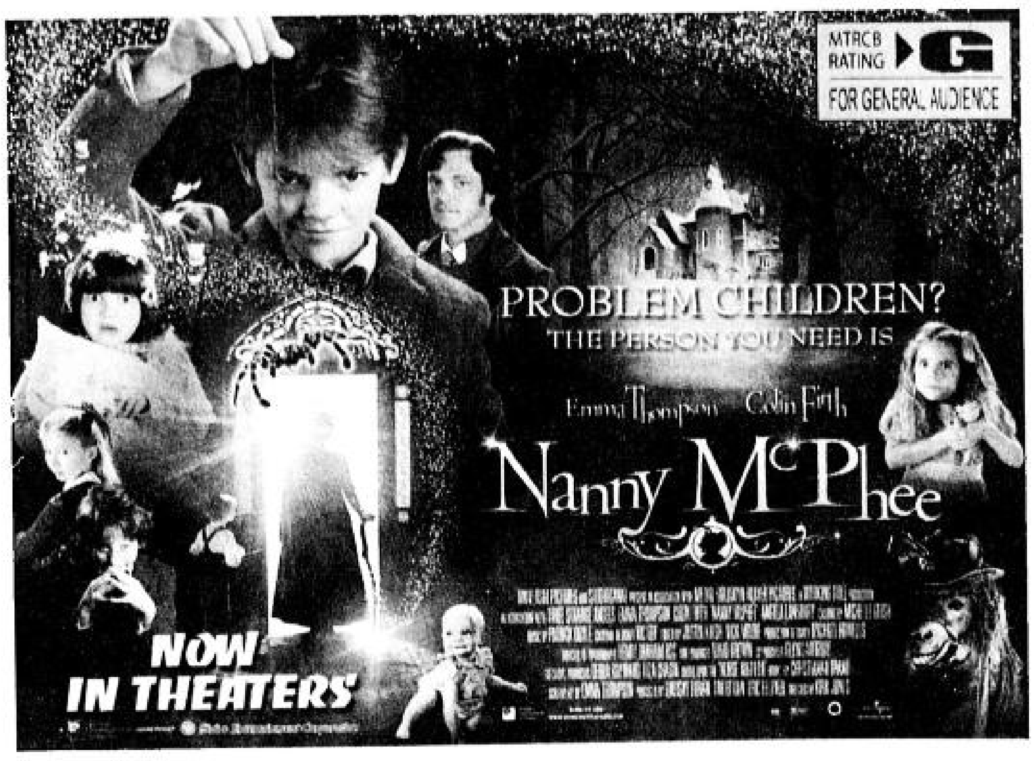

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2 V FOR VENDETTA
3 HOUSE OF FURY

metropolis star cinema
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504285, 6433994
1 MURDER
2 DATE MOVIE
3 ULTRAVIOLET
4 FEARLESS

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)
1 SHAGGY DOG
2 DATE MOVIE

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 (DOLBY EX) 16 BLOCKS
2 CASANOVA
3 (DTS ES) FINAL DESTINATION
4 V FOR VENDETTA

Cine Nepo
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.0121
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 (DOLBY) RESERVED
4 (DTS) RESERVED

Cine Nepo
(Dagupan City) tel (075) 515.0469
1 16 BLOCKS
2 DATE MOVIE
3 (DOLBY) FEARLESS
4 THE DARK D/W HISTORY OF VIOLENCE

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
2 FEARLESS

THEATRES
NE Pacific Mall Cabanatuan, Telephone No. (044) 600-3026
1 16 BLOCKS
2 DATE MOVIE
3 FEARLESS

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-5271
AEON FLUX
DATE MOVIE
RESERVED
RESERVED

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4746
1 HOSTEL
2 PIRANHA-3

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 (SDDS) FINAL DESTINATION -2
2 SANDAKOT NA KALIGAYAHAN
3 RED ROSES
4 (DTS) SNEAK CHARMER

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
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4 ST. ANGIE
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Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 UNANG TIKIM
2 CASANOVA
3 DATE MOVIE
4 SHAGGY DOG

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 HOUSE OF FURY
2 CHECK IN

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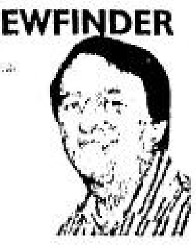
Movie high at 35,000 feet

VIEWFINDER



Nestor U. Torre

OUR RECENT 10-DAY TRIP TO TURKEY started off with an unexpected blast when we savored the delights of our Emirates flight's extensive in-flight entertainment, information and communication system.

The treats were so attractive that we hardly got to sleep during the eight-hour flight to Dubai, and the four-hour flight from Dubai to Istanbul. Who could catch a wink when there were literally hundreds of movies begging to be sampled, and not to mention TV, music and games just for the asking?

We started with Oscar Best Picture winner "Crash," then went on to watch "Good Night and Good Luck," "Elizabethtown," "In Her Shoes," and parts of "Just Like Heaven," "Proof," "School for Seduction," and "The Family Stone."

Aside from current or recent titles, the Emirates entertainment slate also includes "all-time greats," so we had a fun time getting reacquainted with "JFK," "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kidd," "Rebecca," "The Sound of Music," "The Wizard of Oz" and "Quiz Show," even if only in snippets.

Of course, we were most interested in viewing "Crash," to see why US film academy members thought it was a better film than "Brokeback Mountain." Well, the movie packed quite topical and dramatic wallop, and is a more complex production because it pulls multiple characters into its central vortex of violence and racial strife in Los Angeles.

As for "Good Night and Good Luck," **George Clooney**'s film impresses with its austere, veritably docu-drama depiction of revered TV journalist **Edward Murrow**'s courageous fight for media freedom during the witchhunts instigated in the '50s by US Senator **McCarthy.**

The movie's austere and rigorously objective tone is radically in constrast to **Clooney**'s show biz persona, which is breezy and devil-may-care. Which just goes to show how much the former "sexiest man alive" has matured and developed artistically in the last decade.

Jasmine Trias

Some "American Idol" alumni have taken pains to distance themselves from the show, but **Jasmine Trias** acknowledges, "Though I'm trying to come into my own as an artist, I recognize that 'AI' has opened a lot of doors for me."

Back in Manila for shows with South Border—with whom she'll tour the States later this summer—**Jasmine** shares that promoting her self-titled album is a pleasant "chore" for her (she's peformed for her fans in Singapore, Guam and Japan), especially because she's often accompanied by members of her family.

She's delighted with her fans' enthusiastic response to her album, which has received favorable feedback in the US, and is certified gold in the Philippines.

We spotted **Jasmine** in the audience of "American Idol" last Wednesday. The show is telecast live on Star World at 6 p.m. every Wednesday and Thursday, with replays at 8 p.m. and 11:30 p.m.

Tom Jones

Tom Jones is back with a new dance album, "Do Ya Think I'm Sexy." The 12 cuts include "She's A Lady," "For Once In My Life," "Listen to the Music," "You've Got A Friend," "Kiss An Angel Good Morning," and "I Love A Rainy Night."

First death anniversay

April 2 (last Sunday of Lent) is the first death anniversary of the late **Pope John Paul II**. The Rosary Way 70x7x Movement, a lay Marian organization, is holding a Rosary-Novena to Our Lady of Joy (since March 24). Those who wish to join the "communion of saints" in honor of the late pontiff may offer spiritual bouquets for his early canonization.

MTV Summer Break

From April 20 to 22, "MTV Summer Break with Coca-Cola will turn the island of Boracay into one big party place, with relay races, bikini wrestling matches, dance parties, yoga classes, and loads of games and concerts. Get a chance to win a free trip by sending in 10 Coca-Cola crowns or caps with your name, age, contact details and signature to the contest c/o MTV Philippines (Unit C, The Fort Entertainment Center, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig 1634).

Mocha at Tavern

Mocha performs Thursday at Tavern on the Square in Greenbelt 3. Gifted with good looks, grooving dancing feet and cool singing voice, Mocha is the new "It" girl on the band circuit. Visit www.tavernonthesquare.com.

And on all Wednesdays at Tbar, enjoy happy hour while listening to relaxing music. Join in the celebration of Tbar's first anniversary, with special discounts.

Easy English seminars

On April 1 and/or 2, a new series of Easy English seminars will be held at Corban Communications (842-6665). The comprehensive package of conversation, grammar and writing for students, housewives and professionals runs for 30 hours.

"Kerygma TV'

Every Wednesday at 11:30 p.m. on RPN-9, **Bo Sanchez** and **Rissa B. Singson** host "Kerygma TV," a Catholic program.

On March 28, Bo and **Rissa** will talk on "Knowing How Blessed You Are" at the Bulung Pulungan lunchtime forum of Women in Media at the Hotel Philippine Plaza.

Movies on TV

Today on HBO at 8:15 a.m., "Footloose."

On Cinemax at 1:30 p.m. "That Touch of Mink."

Sam Concepcion

Since 2002, young **Sam Concepcion** has been attending Trumpets' Playshop, where he's honed his talent in singing, dancing and acting. He's now one of the finalists in the Big Division of the "Little Big Star" Kiddie singing tilt on Channel 2. Instructively, he was voted "My Favorite Star" in the contest's recent elimination round and three fan sites and online forums about him averaged 120,000 hits last month. Clearly, **Sam** is a star just waiting to be born.

Trumpets Playshop is back with a new workshop venue, at the AFP Theater and Learning Links in Sta. Rosa, Laguna, apart from its regular venues at the Shangri-La Plaza Mall and Alabang Town Center. Classes start April 3. Call 636-2862.

POWER PLANT CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41 DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

ULTRAVIOLET PG13 2:00,4:00,6:00, 8:00,10:00	GLORY ROAD G 12:15,2:45,5:15, 7:45,10:15	NANNY MCPHEE G 12:30,2:50,5:10, 7:30,9:50
SHE'S THE MAN PG13 1:45,3:55,6:05, 8:15,10:25	NORTH COUNTRY R13 12:15,2:45,5:15, 7:45,10:15	V FOR VENDETTA R13 1:30

MOVIES AND SCREENING SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR VERIFICATION CALL 898 144041
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GUARANTEED SEATS
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

1 GLORY ROAD 12:30, 3:10, 5:50, 8:30, 11:00 G
2 ULTRA VIOLET 12:05, 2:15, 4:25, 6:35, 8:45, 11:00 PG-13
3 NANNY McPHEE 1:20, 3:45, 6:10, 8:35, 11:00 G
4 NORTH COUNTRY 5:20, 11:00 | V FOR VENDETTA 2:20, 8:20 R-13

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GREENHILLS SHOPPING CENTER, ORTIGAS AVENUE, GREENHILLS, SAN JUAN, METRO MANILA
THEATRE MALL GREENHILLS
a landmark reinvented!
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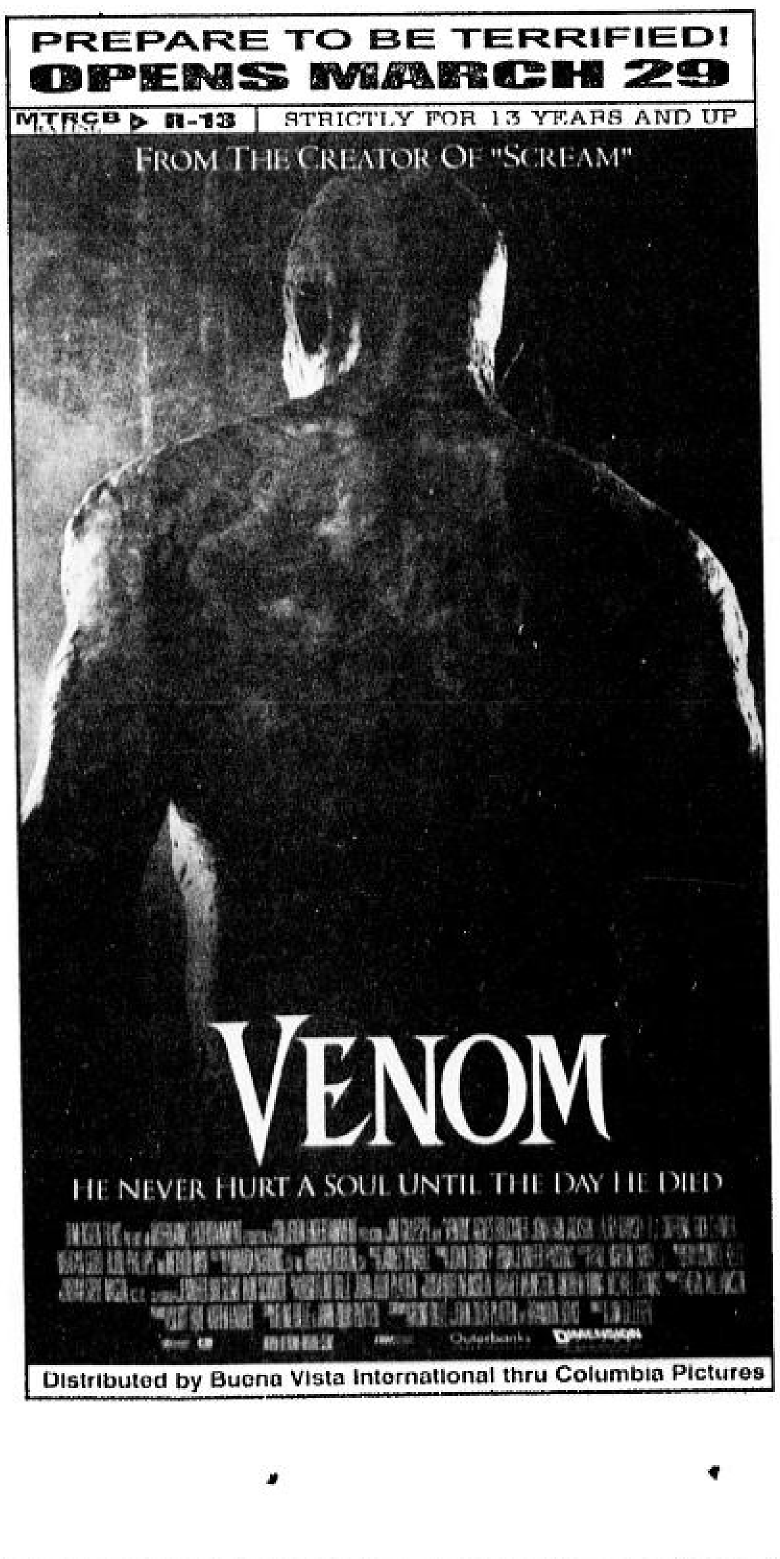
1 NORTH COUNTRY 11:45, 2:30, 5:10, 7:50, 10:30 R13
2 V FOR VENDETTA 11:00, 1:45, 4:30, 7:15, 10:00 R13
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX
PROMENADE GREENHILLS
...a dinetertainment for all!
NOW SHOWING
3 GLORY ROAD 11:35, 2:20, 5:05, 7:50, 10:30 GP
4 ULTRA VIOLET 10:45, 1:05, 3:20, 5:35, 7:50, 10:10 PG13
5 NANNY MC PHEE 11:45, 2:05, 4:20, 6:35, 8:50 GP
TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722 4496.

MUSIC MUSEUM
MARCH 30, 2006 RICO J. PUNO 9:00PM
MARCH 31, 2006 RAYMOND LAUCHENGCO 9:00PM

TEATRINO PROMENADE GREENHILLS
EVERY MONDAY MARCH 24, 25, 30, 31, 2006
TEATRINO DANCE NIGHT 7:00PM
WERE STILL HOT "THE MUSICAL" 9:00PM
FOR INQUIRIES CALL 722-4532 LOC. 116
FOR INQUIRIES & RESERVATION, PLS. CALL: 721-6726 OR 721-0635


PREPARE TO BE TERRIFIED!
OPENS MARCH 29
MTRCB R-13
STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS AND UP
FROM THE CREATOR OF "SCREAM"
VENOM
HE NEVER HURT A SOUL UNTIL THE DAY HE DIED
Distributed by Buena Vista International thru Columbia Pictures

'I hear famous people'

A-list celebrities get into the advertising voiceover act

JULIA Roberts for AOL; George Clooney for Budweiser

QUEEN Latifah for Pizza Hut; Kevin Spacey for Honda.

NEW YORK—"BRIGHT. CRISP. CLEAN. Pure," says the silky smooth, perfectly masculine voice on the American beer commercial. "This is Budweiser. *This* is beer."

Quick, who is that? Hint: It's a big movie star. Though his name is never mentioned, the makers of Budweiser are banking on the fact that US television viewers will get it eventually—and that they'll say "Wow!" when they do.

Twenty years ago, voiceovers were the domain of the baritone radio announcer or the character actor. No longer. These days, more A-list stars than you might imagine are cashing in.

Kevin Spacey's pitching Honda. Kelsey Grammer does Disney. Kiefer Sutherland voices Apple commercials, and his dad, Donald, did Volvo. There's Queen Latifah (Pizza Hut), Sean Connery (Level 3 Communications), Christian Slater (Panasonic), Gene Hackman (Oppenheimer Funds)—oh, and then there's Julia Roberts, in a recent campaign for America Online.

It seems no one's too rich or famous to do a voiceover. It's not too hard to see why the celebs like it: It's an easy, lucrative form of work—a few recording sessions where you can show up with messy hair and no makeup. The more difficult question is why advertisers are willing to spend a huge chunk of their budget on a star whose voice, however distinctive, likely won't be recognized by many.

Mystified

"Honestly, sometimes I'm mystified," says Maureen Kelly, a casting director who's worked in the voiceover field for two decades. "I guarantee you most people couldn't tell the AOL voice was Julia Roberts. I'm just not sure why advertisers spend this astronomical amount of money when the voice isn't even identifiable."

By astronomical, we're talking seven figures, easy. Although companies won't say how much they pay, industry experts say a megastar like Roberts would have to make well into that range.

Or George Clooney, that mysterious Budweiser beer voice. When Anheuser-Busch was searching for "a classic voice" last year, the company hit on Clooney as the perfect embodiment of its product. "George Clooney—it's almost a brand in itself," says Dan McHugh, vice president for trademark brands. "It just made a lot of sense for us."

The idea, says McHugh, is that the consumer will "sort of know the voice. They may not necessarily place it right away, but when they do, they say, 'Wow'"! It's that whole intrigue of discovery." In other words, the "cool" factor is higher because there's mystery involved.

Laura Cheshire, a commercial director in New York, says many celebrities have distinct vocal patterns that set them apart—recognized or not.

"They have a special authority, even if you can't name them on the spot," says Cheshire, who directed a current Panasonic ad with Christian Slater (he participated by remote hookup.) "It's usually worth the expense, because you get more emotion—which sells more product."

Twenty years ago, says Linda Weaver of the Access Talent agency, most jobs went to radio announcers. Martin Sheen was one of the first well-known actors to make the plunge, voicing ads for Pepsi and Maxwell House in the 1980s.

Eventually, voiceovers became seen as acting jobs, not announcing jobs. "I can't tell you how often I am told, 'not announcer-y, not announcer-y,'" says Kelly, who owns the Just Voices casting house. "I hear it from everyone."

More genuine

Also, this is a time when big stars by the droves are voicing animated films—Robin Williams, Antonio Banderas, Cameron Diaz, Ben Stiller, and so on.

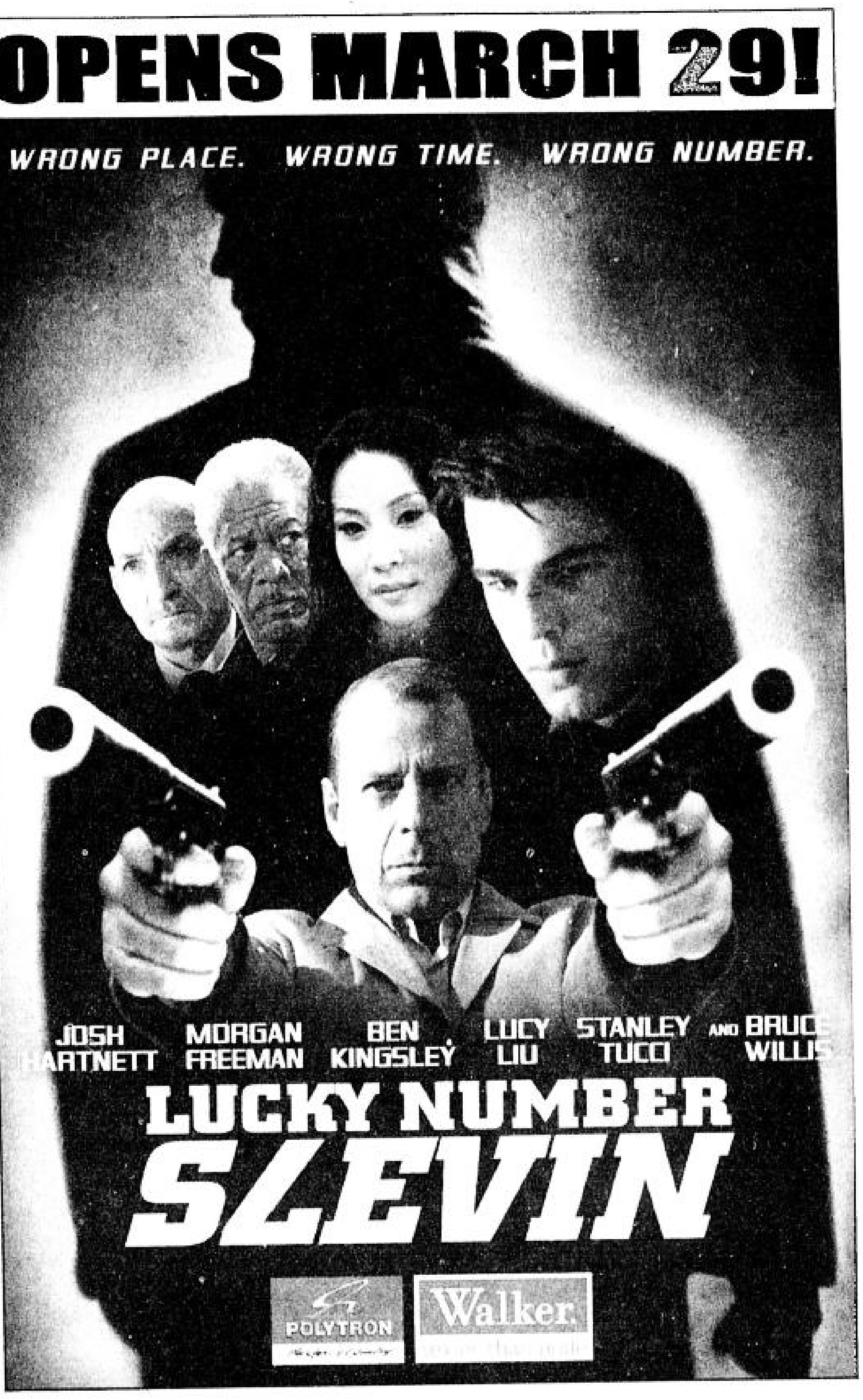
As for Clooney, among the hottest male stars on the planet, he preferred to do a voiceover rather than appear on camera, says McHugh of Anheuser-Busch. Clooney was conscious of the talk of stars selling out, and "he really liked the idea of a voiceover," McHugh said. "This felt a lot more genuine to him."

There is talk in the voiceover community of name actors pushing aside what Alison Fraser, a New York theater actress, calls "the bread-and-butter" people.

Twice nominated for a Tony theater award, Fraser nonetheless made her living for 12 years primarily on voiceovers.

She says she respects the choices of both actors and advertisers.

Still, she says, she can't help but feel a pang when she hears of a huge star doing a voiceover campaign. "I think, oh geez, why do *they* need to do that?" *Jocelyn Noveck, AP*


OPENS MARCH 29!
WRONG PLACE. WRONG TIME. WRONG NUMBER.
JOSH HARTNETT MORGAN FREEMAN BEN KINGSLEY LUCY LIU STANLEY TUCCI AND BRUCE WILLIS
LUCKY NUMBER SLEVIN

glorietta GREENBELT ALABANG TOWN CENTER AYALA CENTER CEBU MARKET! MARKET! Ayala Malls

AT THE CINEMAS

THX

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G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 V FOR VENDETTA	2 ULTRAVIOLET	3 SHE'S THE MAN	4 GLORY ROAD			
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 NANNY MCPHEE	2 SHE'S THE MAN	3 THX ULTRAVIOLET GUARANTEED SEATS	4 HOSTEL	5 GLORY ROAD	6 NORTH COUNTRY	7 V FOR VENDETTA
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 ULTRAVIOLET	2 NORTH COUNTRY					
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX ULTRAVIOLET GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX NORTH COUNTRY GUARANTEED SEATS	3 GLORY ROAD GUARANTEED SEATS	4 V FOR VENDETTA GUARANTEED SEATS	5 NANNY MCPHEE GUARANTEED SEATS		
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX NORTH COUNTRY	2 NANNY MCPHEE	3 ULTRAVIOLET	4 SHE'S THE MAN	5 GLORY ROAD		
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 CASANOVA	2 LAST HOLIDAY	3 FINAL DESTINATION 3	4 SYRIANA			
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 ULTRAVIOLET	2 NORTH COUNTRY	3 GLORY ROAD	4 NANNY MCPHEE	5 SHE'S THE MAN		

At the Activity Center

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Customer Service Numbers: Glorietta - 752 7272; from 10am to 8pm
Greenbelt - 752 4853; from 11am to 12mn
Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; from 10am to 8pm
Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc 324
Market! Market! - 886 7519

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BPI Installment Madness March 15 to 31, 2006	Anson's Emporium Exhibit March 12 to 31, 2006
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GREENBELT
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Repertory Philippines presents 7 NG UMAGA
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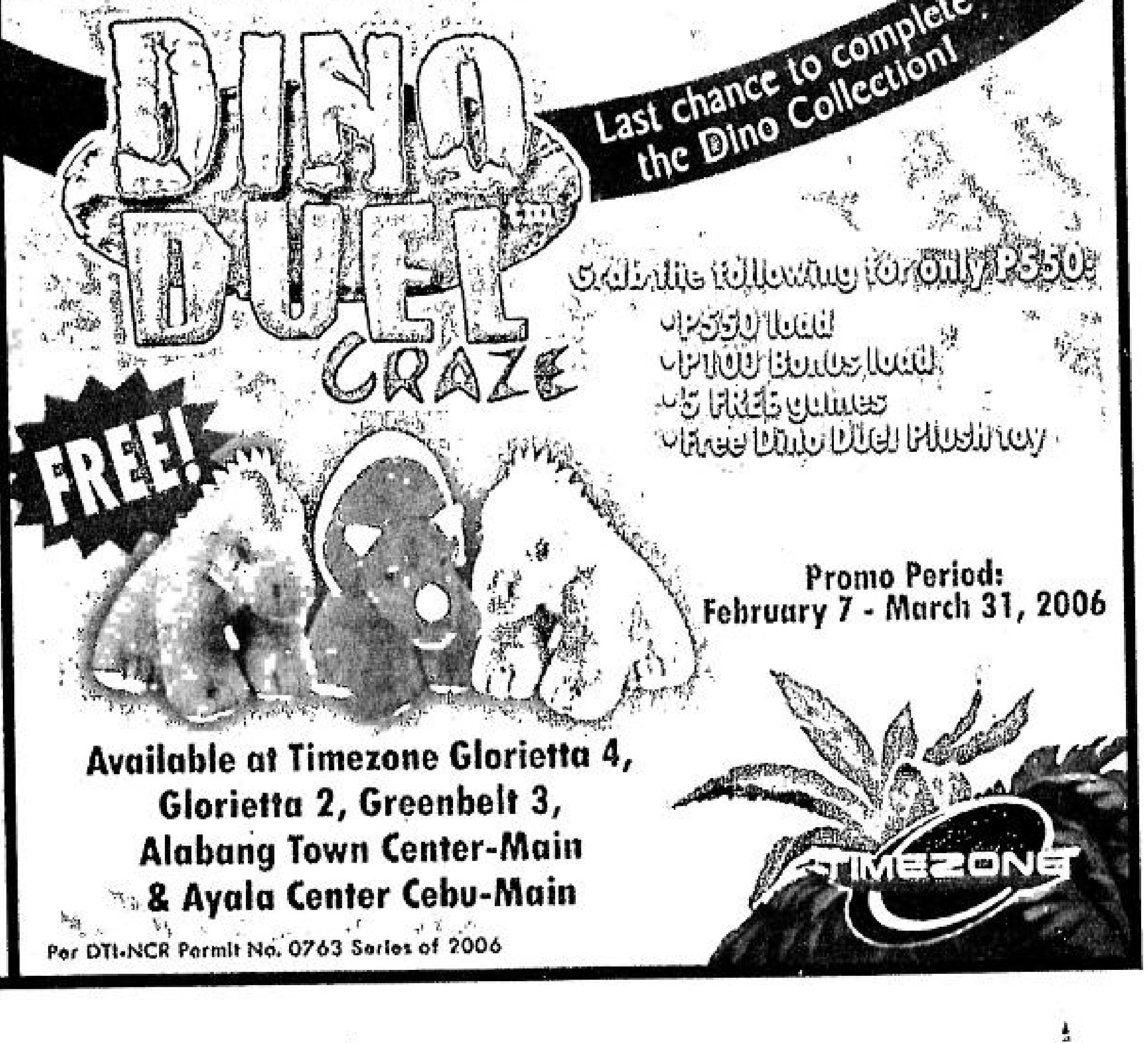
RENT
TWO THUMBS UP!


DINO DUEL CRAZE
Last chance to complete the Dino Collection!
Grab the following for only P550:
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- 5 FREE games
- Free Dino Duel Plush toy

FREE!
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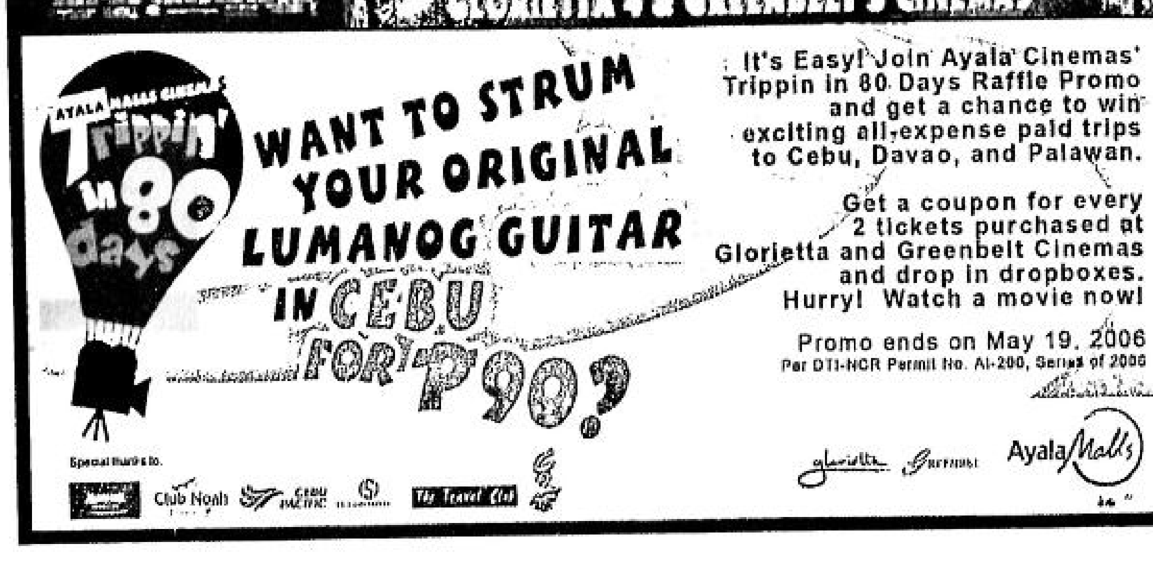
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0763 Series of 2006


WANT TO STRUM YOUR ORIGINAL LUMANOG GUITAR IN CEBU FOR P90?
It's Easy! Join Ayala Cinemas' Trippin in 80 Days Raffle Promo and get a chance to win exciting all-expense paid trips to Cebu, Davao, and Palawan.
Get a coupon for every 2 tickets purchased at Glorietta and Greenbelt Cinemas and drop in dropboxes. Hurry! Watch a movie now!
Promo ends on May 19, 2006
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. AI-200, Series of 2006
Special thanks to:
AYALA MALLS CINEMAS Trippin' in 80 days
Club Noah
CEBU PACIFIC
The Travel Club
glorietta Greenbelt Ayala Malls

Exit Rustom Padilla

By Nini Valera

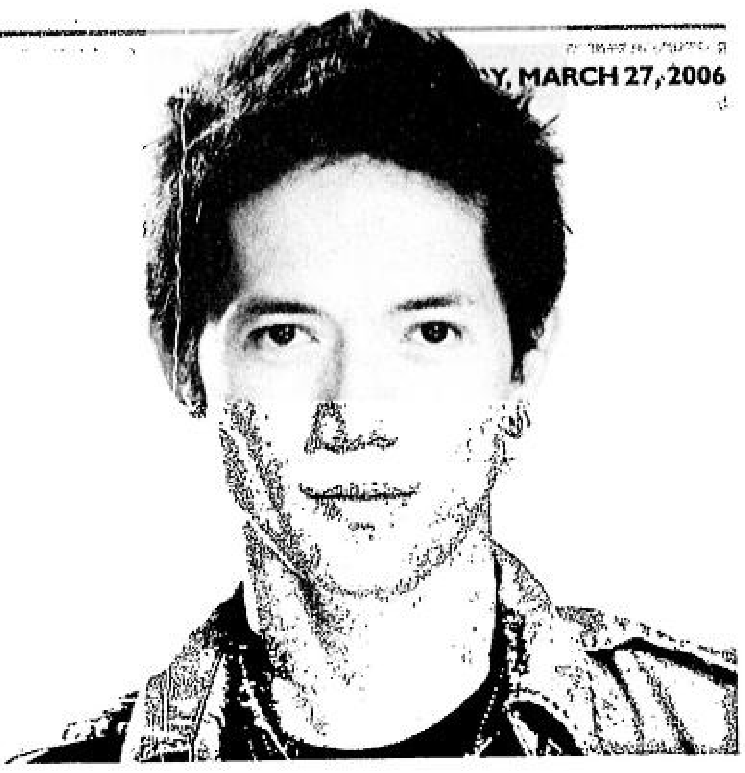
FREE AT LAST WAS HOW "PINOY BIG Brother Celebrity Edition" housemate Rustom Padilla described himself a day after he chose to go on voluntary exit from the top-rating show.

"I've got nothing more to prove," he told INQUIRER Entertainment on Thursday in an exclusive interview. "I wanted to leave Big Brother's house because I was no longer 100 percent into it."

Rustom stressed that his departure was voluntary and not a forced eviction, as earlier rumored. Neither was it a change of heart, he added.

"I told Big Brother inside the confessional room that my purpose for joining was not about the prizes (P1 million and a condominium unit)," he said. "If so, I would go all the way." From Day 1, he said, his purpose had been to "introduce" himself to the public.

In a dramatic revelation on March 4, the actor admitted to fellow housemate Keanna Reeves that he was gay. He confided to her—and thus to millions of viewers of the reality show—that, as a three-year-old child, he had endured beatings from his father, Roy Padilla, who once caught him in a girl's dress.


"IN MY heart, I already won."

Coming out of the closet, according to Rustom, was not his only purpose, either. Even before "PBB," he said, he would tell anybody who asked that he was gay.

Being gay, however, was only one part of himself, Rustom said, and not his whole being.

"I showed who I really was in the way I worked in the house, dealt with housemates and treated them, to the point that I cooked for them," Rustom explained. "Until last Sunday... [when] I felt that I had nothing more to prove."

After he was nominated for eviction last week, he realized that he was in a competition, he said, and felt that he was no longer appreciated.

"All this time, I thought I was getting along with the other housemates," he said. "But they still nominated me. No, I didn't take the nomination as a personal affront. It just made me realize that we were in here to win a contest."

He rued that his revelation about his sexuality was even questioned as his means to emerge as top housemate.

"So it's best to leave," Rustom said. "Everything I intended to do in the show I have achieved, anyway, and God gave me flying colors. Why should I still want to win? Pride? Vanity? Greed? Deep in my heart, I already won. Being in the show was already a life changing experience [and] I did it."

Now, about women

He described his coming out of the closet as being freed from bondage.

"Now, I'm experiencing acceptance from people," said Rustom. "I'm happy with my decision. Being gay is not a state of mind; it's your emotional being. I've never had a boyfriend [but] it doesn't mean that I'm not gay. I don't have to be a screaming faggot to be gay. This is me, and I'm gay."

Do women still turn him on?

"Who knows? I still admire women," said Rustom, laughing. "I admire beautiful women. I like to photograph naked women. If I could paint, I would pain naked women."

As an actor, he said, he has "unfinished" business.

"Watching my old movies make me cringe," he admitted. "I feel that I can do a lot more in acting but I would rather work now as a filmmaker."

While he doesn't know what the future holds, Rustom said he was hopeful about life after "Big Brother."

To gay men who are still hiding, he offered this piece of advice: "Come out. God knows who you are."

'CSI: NY' Season 2 premieres April 4

THE LATEST FRANCHISE OF THE PHENOMenal "CSI" series, "CSI: NY" premieres on AXN on April 4.

Gary Sinise returns in Season 2 as Detective Mac Taylor, head of the gritty team that digs deep beneath the fast-paced life of New York City to uncover the trail of death.

The crime lab is relocated to a bigger site with new equipment and the latest in technology.

Dr. Sheldon Hawkes (Hill Harper) moves out of the medical office and into the field.

A much-anticipated crossover episode is "Manhattan Manhunt," a followup to "CSI: Miami's "Felony Flight." The case unites Taylor and Detective Horatio Caine, his counterpart in Florida, in a frantic hunt for a serial killer.

In addition to the original cast—Melina Kanakaredes, Carmine Giovinazzo, Sinise and Harper—Lindsay Monroe joins the team as Anna Belknap, a rookie CSI.

JENNIFER LEE
RYAN EIGENMANN
AVI SIWA
CO-ED SCANDAL
"Sex, lies... and the video that changed their lives."

exclusive SCREENING
Robinsons Movieworld
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"The Shocking Video that Rocked the Whole Country"
The Co-Ed: two girls and a boy of barely legal age are caught having sex on tape. Who are they? Why did they do it? Where are they now?
The film draws answers from the urban legends that grew around the controversial sex videos and the result is a humurous narrative with elements of mock documentary.
Leo is a 21-year old co-ed student in a prestigious college. He dreams of making and starring in his own 'dirty movie' and becomes obsessed with the idea. Leo eggs her girlfriend Claire to be part of the video. She hesitates but gives in to the idea soon enough, when she finds her most compelling reason in the person of a sexy girl named Miles.
Opens MARCH 22
MTRCB Rating: R-18
upclose and personal with JENNIFER LEE
Cinema Lobby
MARCH 22 Ermita 2PM; Galleria 4PM; Metro East 6PM
MARCH 25 Metro East 2PM; Galleria 4PM; Ermita 6PM

SHANG CINEPLEX
① NANNY MCPHEE
MTRCB. GP
12.20, 2:45, 5:10, 7:35, 10:00 LMF
② ULTRAVIOLET
MTRCB. PG-13
1.20, 3:30, 5.40, 7.50, 10:00 LMF
③ SHE'S THE MAN
MTRCB. PG-13
2.00, 4.25, 6:50, 9:15 LMF
④ GLORY ROAD
MTRCB. GP
2.00, 4.40, 7:20, 10:00 LMF
PREMIERE THEATRE
NORTH COUNTRY / V FOR VENDETTA
MTRCB R-13 1:00, 7:00 / 4:00, 10:00 LMF
Movies and schedules are subject to change without prior notice
Catch the Cineplex Special
Enjoy first class entertainment at amazing prices!
Starting March 20, MONDAY & TUESDAY
special prices at P99 for cinemas 1-4 and
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Shangri-La Plaza

ARANETA CENTER
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THE ONLY CINEPLEX IN THE COUNTRY
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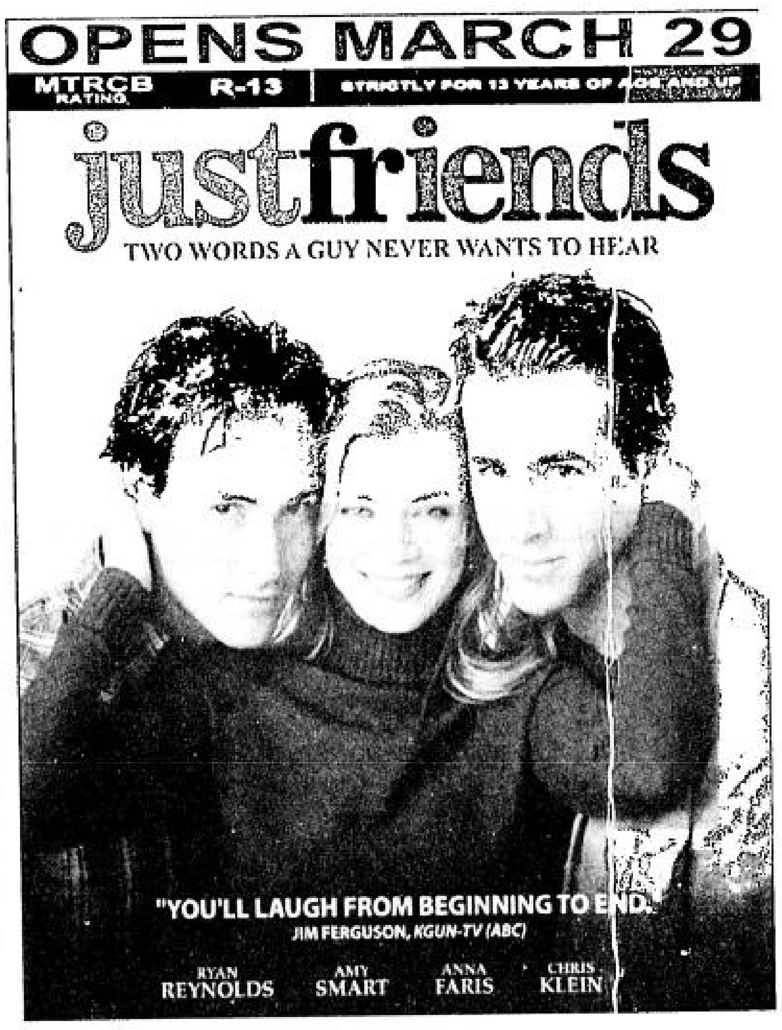
DOLBY DIGITAL-EX

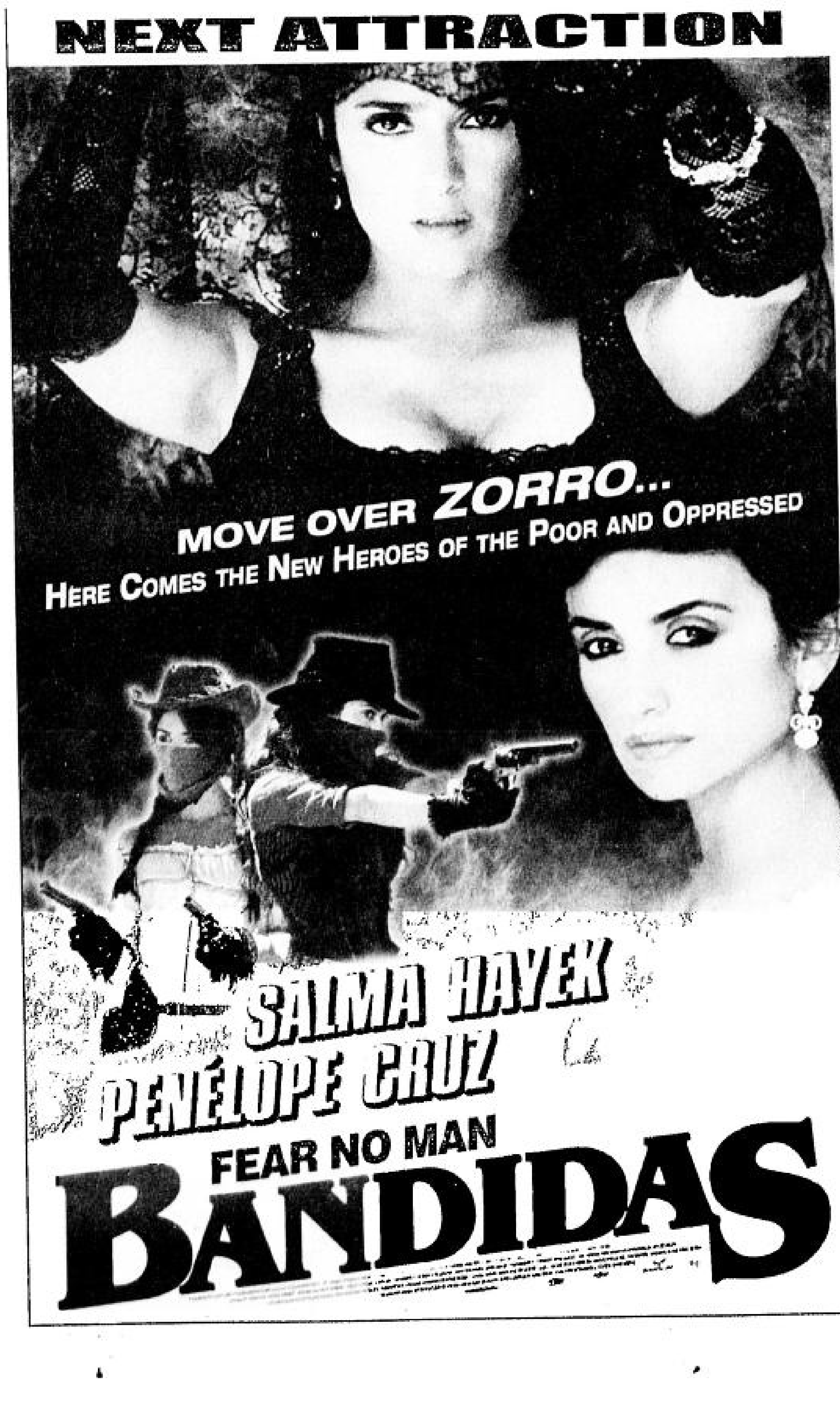
GLORY ROAD 1:05 / 3:50 / 6:35 / 9:20	NANNY McPHEE 12:50 / 3:00 / 5:10 / 7:20 / 9.30	ULTRAVIOLET 1:10 / 3:20 / 5:30 / 7:40 / 9:50	GLOBE PLATINUM CINEMA
NORTH COUNTRY 1:20 / 4:00 / 6:40 / 9:20	V FOR VENDETTA 1:40 / 4:20 / 7:00 / 9:40	SHAGGY DOG 12:40 / 2:55 / 5:10	ULTRAVIOLET 2:40 / 4:50 / 7:00 / 9:10
SHE'S THE MAN 1:20 / 4:00	HOSTEL 1:20 / 3:25 / 5:30 / 7:35 / 9:40	DATE MOVIE 7:30 / 9:40 16 BLOCKS 7:05 / 9:40	ONLY P120 ADMISSION GLOBE PLATINUM P249/P299

Alimall CINEMAS

V FOR VENDETTA 12:00 / 2:40 / 5:20 / 8:00	ULTRAVIOLET 12.05 R2 / 1:55 / 4:05 / 6:15 / 8:25	NANNY McPHEE 12:05 R2 / 1:55 / 4:05 / 6:15 / 8:25
HOSTEL 12.15 / 2:20 / 4:25 / 6:30 / 8:35	THE FEARLESS 12:00 / 2:05 / 4:10 / 6:15 / 8:20	DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

For ticket inquiries, please call TicketNet at 911-5555 or log on to www.ticketnet.com.ph
ARANETA COLISEUM
MICHAEL BOLTON LIVE IN MANILA
MARCH 29, WEDNESDAY 8 pm
SHARON CUNETA MY MEGA VALENTINE - THE REPEAT
MARCH 31, FRIDAY 8 pm

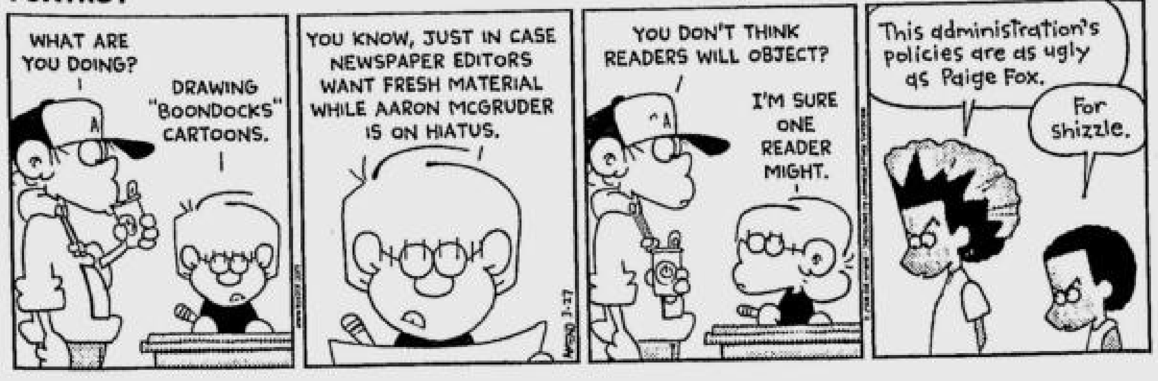

OPENS MARCH 29
MTRCB RATING R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND UP
just friends
TWO WORDS A GUY NEVER WANTS TO HEAR
"YOU'LL LAUGH FROM BEGINNING TO END."
JIM FERGUSON, KGUN-TV (ABC)
RYAN REYNOLDS
AMY SMART
ANNA FARIS
CHRIS KLEIN



MTRCB RATING G GENERAL PATRONAGE
ALL AGES ADMITTED
It's time to break the ice
ICE AGE 2
OPENS MARCH 29

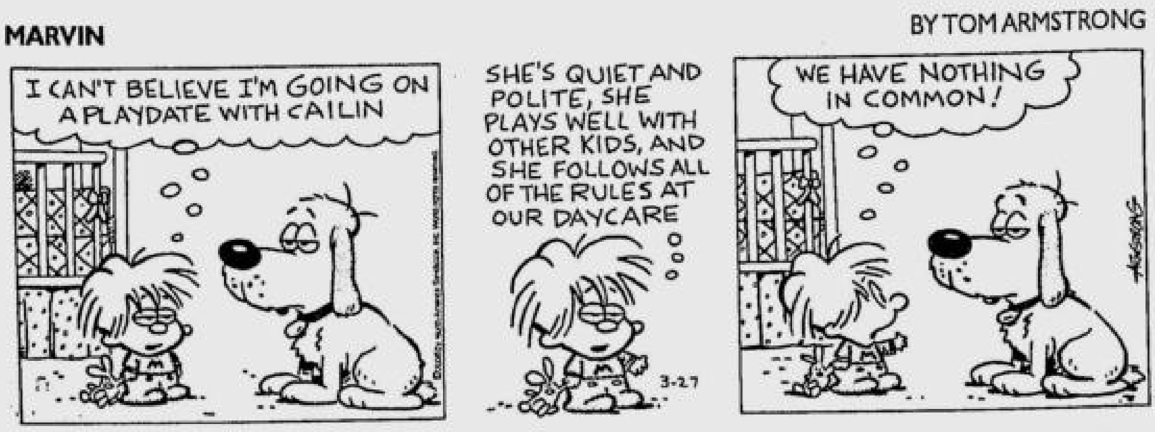
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
DRAWING "BOONDOCKS" CARTOONS.
YOU KNOW, JUST IN CASE NEWSPAPER EDITORS WANT FRESH MATERIAL WHILE AARON MCGRUDER IS ON HIATUS.
YOU DON'T THINK READERS WILL OBJECT?
I'M SURE ONE READER MIGHT.
This administration's policies are as ugly as Paige Fox.
For shizzle.
AMEND 3-27

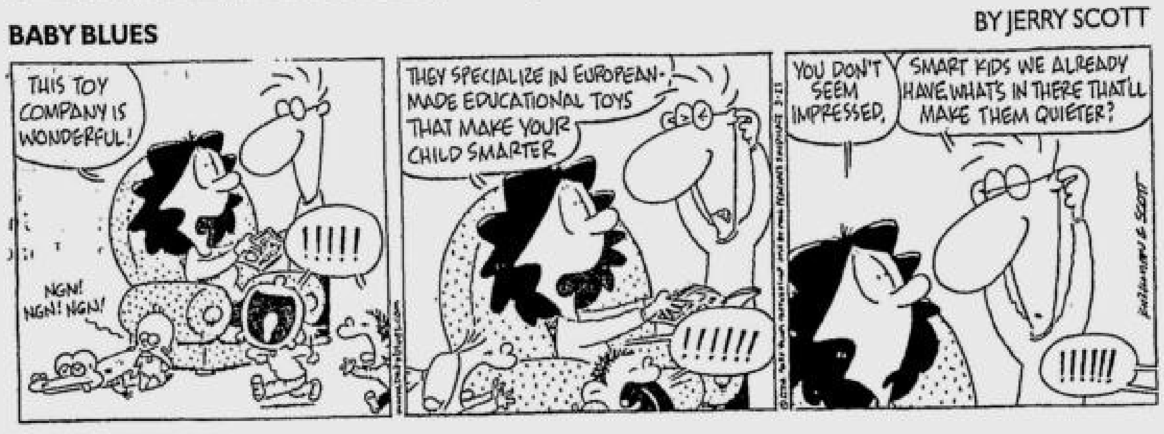
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


I CAN'T BELIEVE I'M GOING ON A PLAYDATE WITH CAILIN
SHE'S QUIET AND POLITE, SHE PLAYS WELL WITH OTHER KIDS, AND SHE FOLLOWS ALL OF THE RULES AT OUR DAYCARE
3-27
WE HAVE NOTHING IN COMMON!
ARMSTRONG

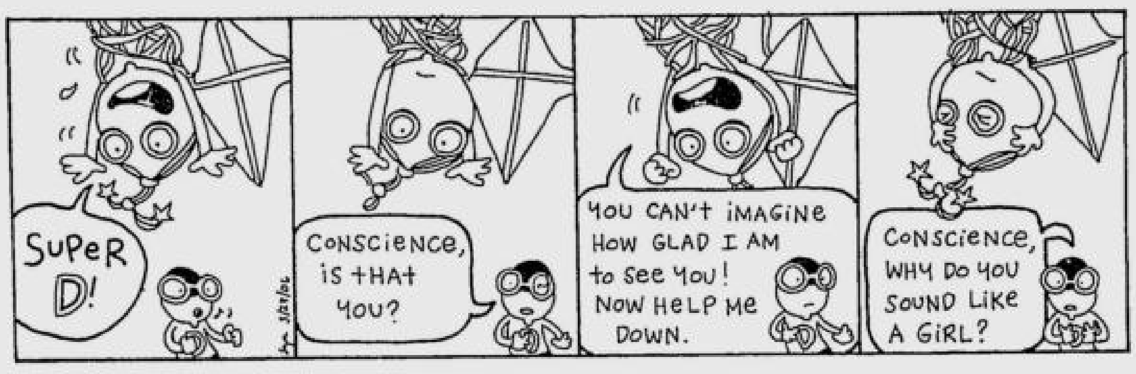
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


THIS TOY COMPANY IS WONDERFUL!
!!!!!
NGN! NGN! NGN!
THEY SPECIALIZE IN EUROPEAN-MADE EDUCATIONAL TOYS THAT MAKE YOUR CHILD SMARTER
!!!!!!
YOU DON'T SEEM IMPRESSED.
SMART KIDS WE ALREADY HAVE. WHAT'S IN THERE THAT'LL MAKE THEM QUIETER?
!!!!!!
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


SuPeR D!
CONSCIENCE, IS THAT YOU?
YOU CAN'T IMAGINE HOW GLAD I AM TO SEE YOU! NOW HELP ME DOWN.
CONSCIENCE, WHY DO YOU SOUND LIKE A GIRL?

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: Many of you acquire a wonderful technical proficiency at something. This is because you're self-reliant, quick to learn and you love to explore new realms. You're an individualist of the first order! You're passionate about your personal causes. Many things you've been involved with for the past decade will now move out of your life. It's time for a change.
Birthdate of: Quentin Tarantino, writer/producer; Sarah Vaughan, jazz singer; Mariah Carey, singer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Do whatever you want today so that you feel more invigorated about life. After all, with the Sun in your sign, it's your turn to do your thing!

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): It's important to get enough rest now. If you think you're sleep-deprived, go to bed earlier. Don't stay up talking to friends that you haven't seen for ages. (Which is what you're tempted to do.)

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Get involved with groups, clubs and organizations now. You'll feel energized by the presence of others. You need social contact now!

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Discussions with bosses, VIPs and parents might be significant today. Don't be afraid to speak up. Others respect what you have to say (even if you don't think so).

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Continue to make efforts to solidify travel plans or matters connected with publishing and higher education. You can make progress in these areas at this time.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Set aside some time to sort out any confusion you have about shared property or the responsibilities you have for others. Make sure you know what is expected from you.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You have an excellent opportunity now to learn more about yourself and your style of relating to others. You can do this by observing your closest relationships.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Continue to work hard to organize, file, clean, paint, sort and categorize what you own at work and at home. Get on top of your scene! (You'll love yourself for it later.)

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): This is a highly creative time for your sign. It's also a wonderful time to have a vacation. Budding romance is exciting for many of you. (Be still, my beating heart.)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Childhood memories and discussions about your youth are taking place now. You might need time alone to process this or digest new information or revelations.

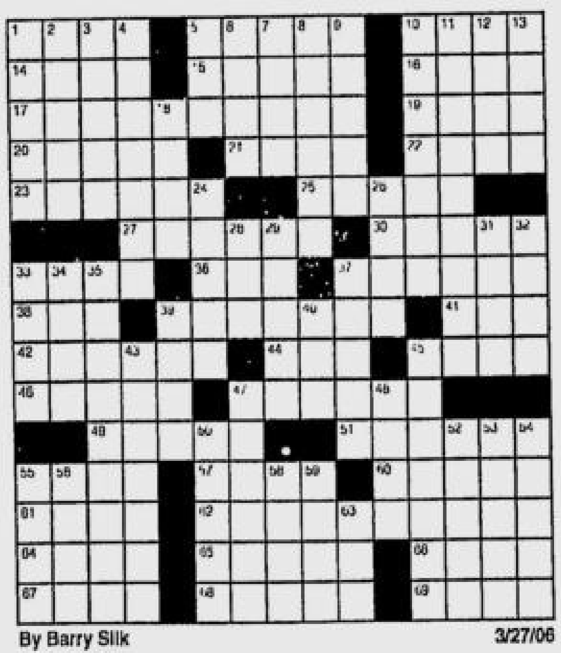
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Increased activity with relatives and siblings is on your agenda now. Be frank with others in your discussions with them. If you say what you feel, others will do likewise.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): It's perfectly normal if you seem to identify with what you own now. We all go through stages of feeling this way now and then.

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Q-Tip, for one
5 Loaf or roll
10 Males-only
14 Carry on
15 Usher's route
16 Jewish wedding dance
17 Lump in the throat?
19 Mimicker
20 Same here
21 Ogler
22 Skier's ride
23 High standards
25 Convicted Helmsley
27 Heed
30 Word with code or colony
33 Cotillion attendees, for short
36 Cry of delight
37 Make bubbly
38 Off one's feed
39 Like the theme of this puzzle
41 Discouraging words
42 Narrowly
44 __ Gatos, CA
45 Labyrinth
46 Hiawatha's craft
47 Champagne cocktail
49 Civil War anthem
51 Implores
55 Tacks on
57 Pitch symbol
60 Profoundly disturbing
61 Cop's route
62 "Monster's Ball" star
64 After the bell
65 TV studio sign
66 Tender
67 First garden
68 Easy wins
69 Old Russian VIP

DOWN
1 Madras mystic
2 Walked in shallow water
3 Playing marble
4 Grieves over
5 Cote call
6 Ready to pluck
7 Catch sight of
8 One member of a gene pair
9 Big name in tractors
10 "Star Trek" star
11 Kingpin
12 Land measurement
13 Actress Teri
18 Like Earhart's flight
24 Building level
26 Columnists' pg.
28 Promise-to-pay letters
29 Bean-based dish
31 The gamut
32 __-majesty
33 Kind of jockey
34 Ms. Fitzgerald
35 Unknown social partner
37 Noted moralist
39 Show off one's muscles
40 Mister turkey
43 Humidify
45 Inflatable life jacket
47 Very dark: pref.
48 Weighty block
50 Blood of the gods
52 Bushy hairdos
53 Egyptian corn
54 More cunning
55 Up for the job
56 Without vitality
58 NFL kicker Jason
59 Coin toss
63 Critical-care ctrs.



By Barry Silk
McLean, VA
3/27/06

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

C	U	R	S	I	V	E	■	C	L	O	S	E	S	T
O	P	E	N	S	E	A	■	H	I	R	O	S	H	I
A	S	C	E	N	T	S	■	E	L	A	S	T	I	C
S	T	O	A	T	■	T	C	E	L	L	■	I	N	K
T	A	L	K	■	A	W	O	K	E	■	E	V	I	L
E	G	O	■	S	C	A	R	Y	■	S	C	A	L	E
R	E	R	E	C	O	R	D	■	K	E	L	L	Y	S
■	■	■	F	O	R	D	■	A	N	N	A	■	■	■
A	V	A	L	O	N	■	S	E	E	D	T	I	M	E
R	E	C	A	P	■	G	O	R	E	S	■	T	A	D
C	H	A	T	■	I	L	I	A	D	■	L	A	N	A
H	I	D	■	S	M	O	L	T	■	G	O	L	D	S
I	C	E	C	A	P	S	■	I	B	E	R	I	A	N
E	L	M	O	R	E	S	■	N	A	R	R	A	T	E
S	E	E	D	I	L	Y	■	G	R	E	E	N	E	R

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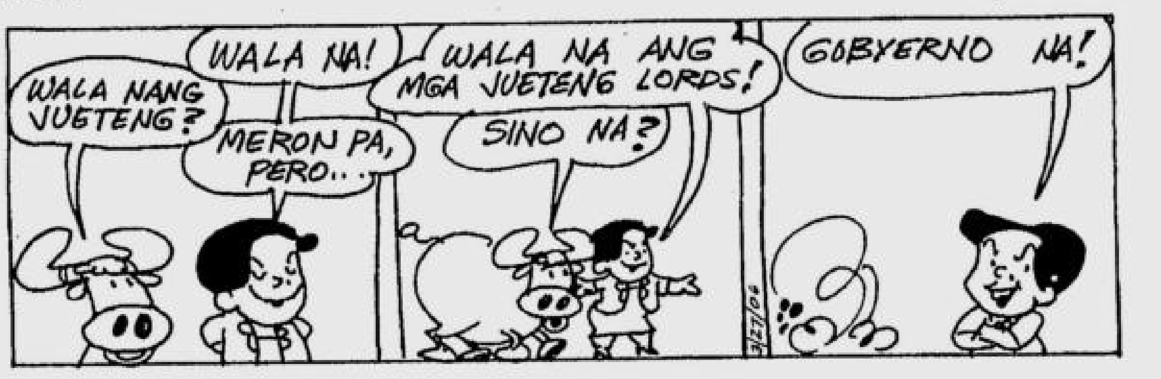
3/27/06

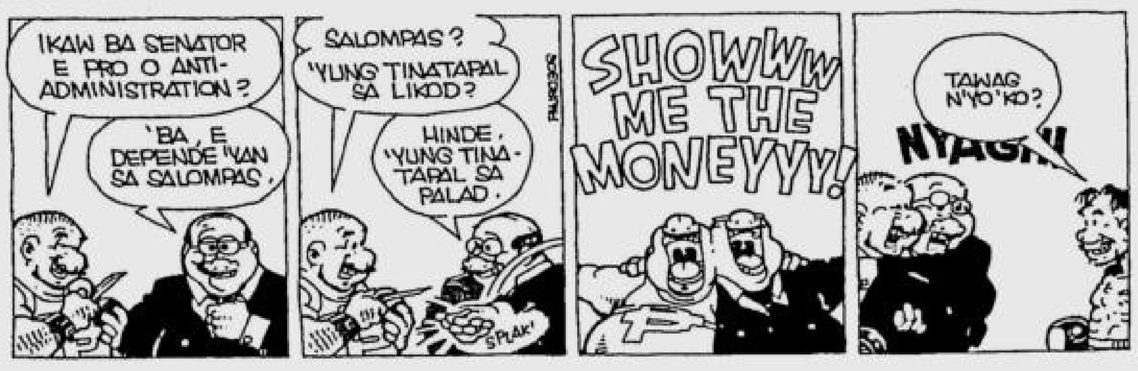
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


WALA NANG JUETENG?
WALA NA!
MERON PA, PERO...
WALA NA ANG MGA JUETENG LORDS!
SINO NA?
GOBYERNO NA!
3/27/06

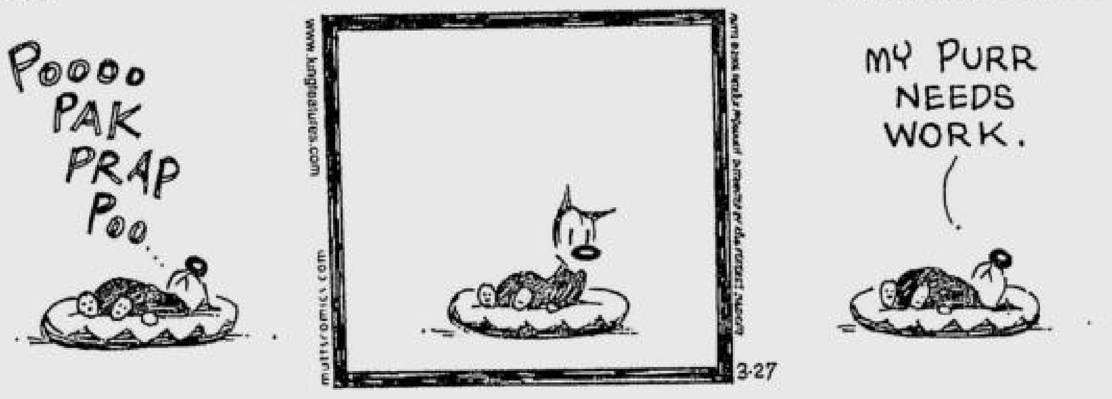
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


IKAW BA SENATOR E PRO O ANTI-ADMINISTRATION?
'BA, E DEPENDE 'YAN SA SALOMPAS.
SALOMPAS? 'YUNG TINATAPAL SA LIKOD?
HINDE. 'YUNG TINATAPAL SA PALAD.
SPLAK!
SHOWWWW ME THE MONEYYY!
TAWAG N'YO 'KO?
NYAGN!

MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL

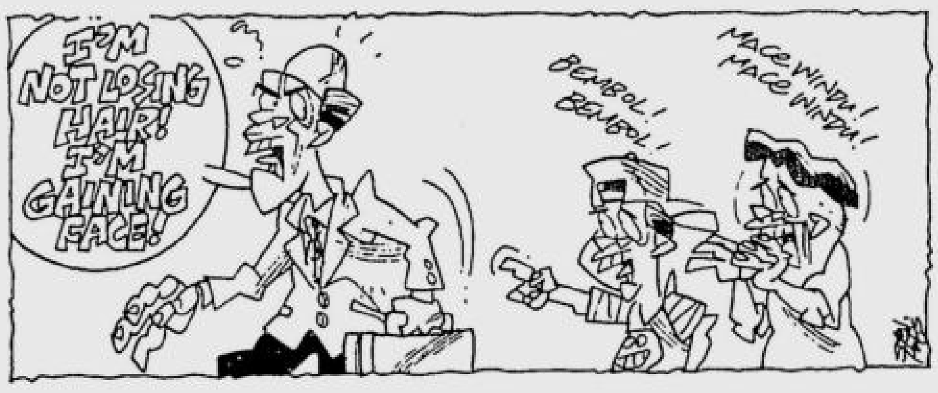

Poooo PAK PRAP Poo
www.kingfeatures.com
muttscomics.com
3-27
MY PURR NEEDS WORK.

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS

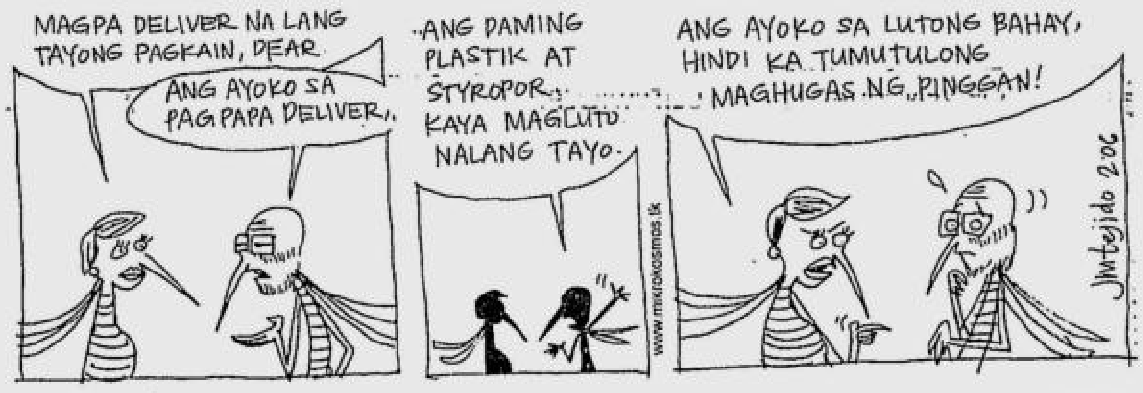
ALAM MONG TUMATANDA KA NA KUNG

TINUTUKSO KA NANG KALBO NG MGA BATA


I'M NOT LOSING HAIR! I'M GAINING FACE!
BEMBOL! BEMBOL!
MACE WINDU! MACE WINDU!

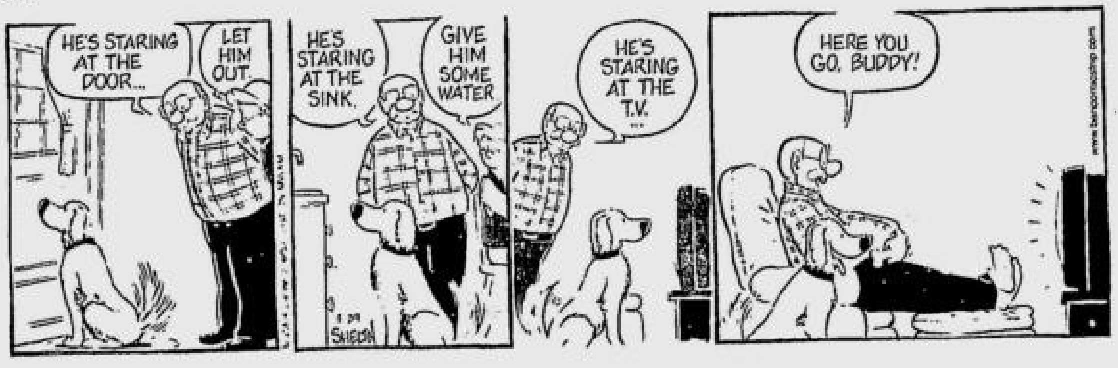
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


MAGPA DELIVER NA LANG TAYONG PAGKAIN, DEAR
ANG AYOKO SA PAG PAPA DELIVER,
ANG DAMING PLASTIK AT STYROPOR, KAYA MAGLUTO NALANG TAYO.
www.mikrokosmos.tk
ANG AYOKO SA LUTONG BAHAY, HINDI KA TUMUTULONG MAGHUGAS NG PINGGAN!
Jmtejido 2'06

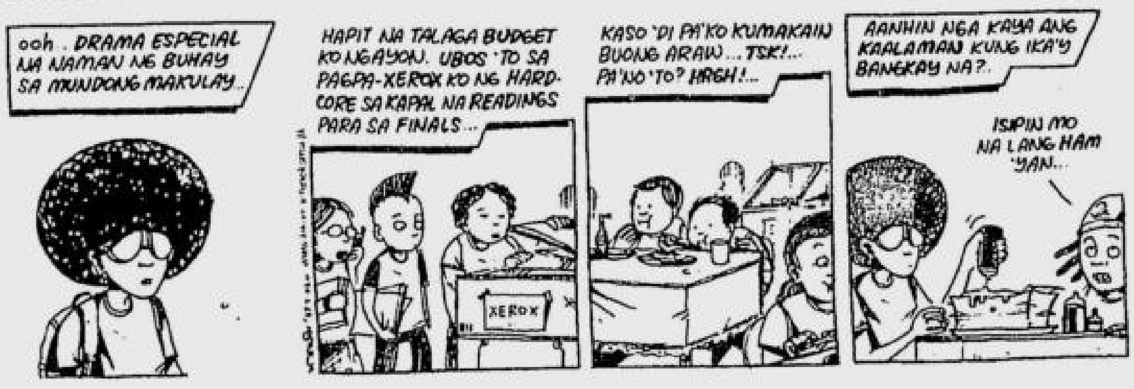
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


HE'S STARING AT THE DOOR...
LET HIM OUT.
HE'S STARING AT THE SINK.
GIVE HIM SOME WATER.
SHELTON
HE'S STARING AT THE T.V. ...
HERE YOU GO, BUDDY!

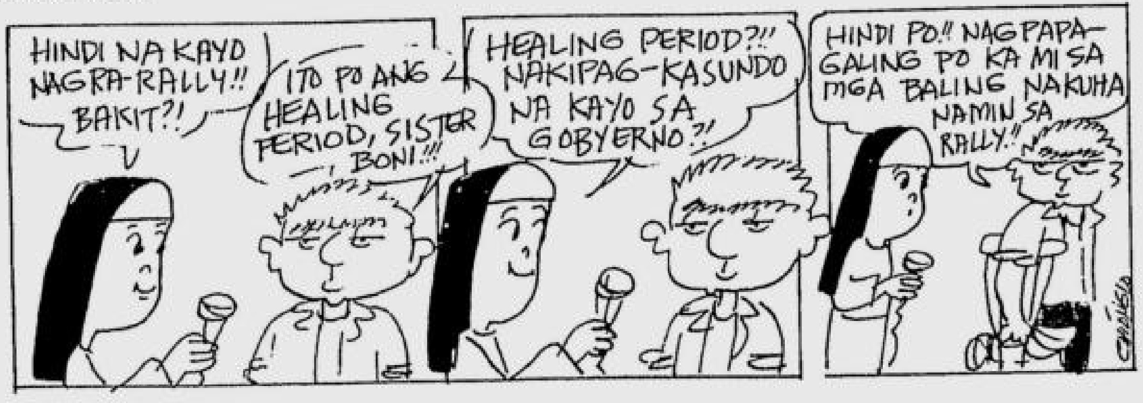
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


ooh.. DRAMA ESPECIAL NA NAMAN NG BUHAY SA MUNDONG MAKULAY..
HAPIT NA TALAGA BUDGET KO NGAYON. UBOS 'TO SA PAGPA-XEROX KO NG HARD-CORE SA KAPAL NA READINGS PARA SA FINALS...
XEROX
KASO 'DI PA'KO KUMAKAIN BUONG ARAW... TSK!.. PA'NO 'TO? HRGH!...
AANHIN NGA KAYA ANG KAALAMAN KUNG IKA'Y BANGKAY NA?..
ISIPIN MO NA LANG HAM 'YAN...

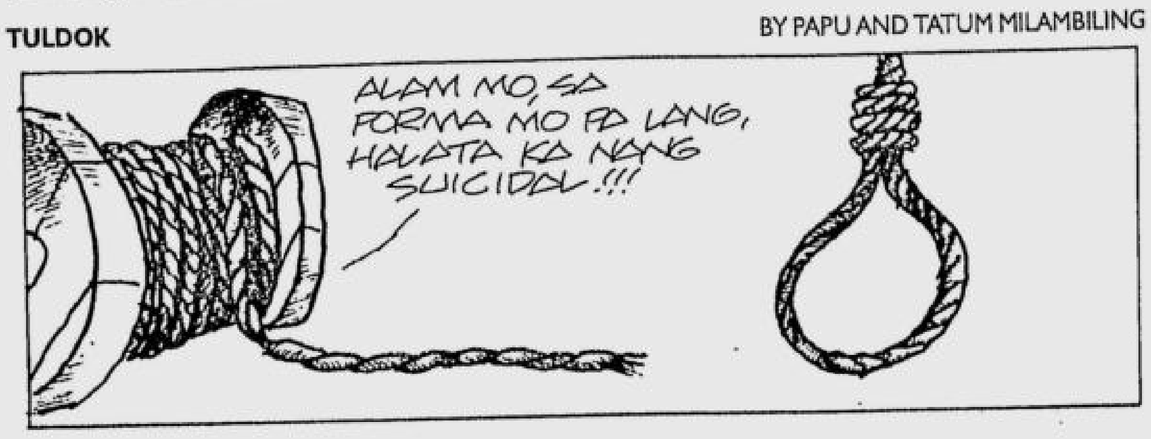
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


HINDI NA KAYO NAGRA-RALLY!! BAKIT?!
ITO PO ANG HEALING PERIOD, SISTER BONI!!!
HEALING PERIOD?!! NAKIPAG-KASUNDO NA KAYO SA GOBYERNO?!
HINDI PO!! NAGPAPA-GALING PO KAMI SA MGA BALING NAKUHA NAMIN SA RALLY!!

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


ALAM MO, SA FORMA MO PA LANG, HALATA KA NANG SUICIDAL!!!

IN "Cuatro Vidas" with Eddie Rodriguez

"AY, PEPITA" with Mario Montenegro

"CONDE de Amor" with Val Castelo

Educating Nita

By Bayani San Diego Jr.
Photos by Roger Carpio
Additional photos courtesy of Nita Javier

A former schoolteacher got a different kind of education in the movies, and found a new calling as coloratura soprano after her retirement

"I NEVER REALLY LOOK AT MY old albums," former LVN star Nita Javier says, giggling at the sight of her black-and-white snapshots from the 1950s.

"That was taken at the premiere of 'Krisalis' in Dalisay Theater," she points to one. "It was on the wedding day of Nida Blanca and Ruth Torres, the father of Kaye."

She catches up with former colleagues as often as she can.

"I have lunch with them," she says. "Oscar and Myrna Obligacion live nearby and they often visit me. I've also kept in touch with Delia Razon. Last year, I went to Los Angeles and stayed in the home of Sylvia La Torre."

If there's one thing she cherishes about the good old days, it's the camaraderie.

"I miss the *barkada*," she says, smiling wistfully.

It was a friend who introduced her to LVN.

"He was a reporter and a neighbor from Caloocan," Nita recalls. "He submitted my picture to Doña Sisang." Doña Sisang, or Narcisa de Leon, owner of LVN, wasted no time in signing up the former schoolmarm named Agripina "Nita" Javier.

"GALAWGAW" with Eddie San Jose and Nida Blanca

"I had just come back from Cebu," Nita says. Her mother was from Cebu City. Armed with an Education degree from the National Teachers' College, Nita had taught Grade 5 pupils at the local Chinese school. "I loved teaching, [but] some of my students started courting me," she gasps. "I was only 22."

Two years later, Nita made her big-screen debut as Eddie San Jose's partner in the Nida Blanca hit "Galawgaw."

NITA at home, today

"Nida was very nice to me," Nita reminisces. "We hit it off because we had the same personality. We were both talkative and tomboyish!"

Gamine

Alas, true to the 1954 film's title, "We were both *galawgaw* (one who cannot sit still)."

Nita's next film assignment, "Saydwok Bendor," once again matched her up with Nida and showcased their gamine appeal.

"We had so much fun on the set," Nita says. "We were running all over Quiapo, chased by cops. We were even thrown in jail. We actually shot that scene in Manila City Jail, *ha*. It really smelled awful; we had to put up with it."

"BANDA Uno" with Armando Goyena

Best remembered as Nida's equally sprightly sidekick, Nita was also cast as the lead in several big movies opposite the studio's most dashing leading men. "My first leading role was in 'Banda Uno' with Armando Goyena."

She was paired with Val Castelo in "Conde de Amor," Mario Montenegro in "Ay, Pepita," Willie Sotelo in "Tuko sa Madre Cacao" and Leroy Salvador and Eddie Rodriguez in "Cuatro Vidas."

"IBONG Adarna" with Carlos Salazar

In the last one, she shared the screen with three other 1950s beauties—Rebecca del Rio, Cecilia Lopez and Ludy Carmona.

"I made about 13 movies with LVN."

She even co-starred with Carlos Salazar in Manuel Conde's "Ibong Adarna."

Nita was also handpicked to appear in a Hollywood movie, "Surrender—Hell!" with Keith Andes and Susan Cabot in 1959.

"They chose me because I was far from dainty," she chortles. "I didn't talk to the American star and kept to myself most of the time."

YESTERDAY

In a way, she continued her higher education on the LVN lot. "Doña Sisang shared with us so many practical lessons, like the importance of being punctual and thrifty. She taught us to save, to be wise with our earnings."

Nita was a budding LVN star when her cousins introduced her to young architect Rafael Ng in 1955.

After four years of courtship and engagement, Paeng proposed.

"When I asked permission from Doña Sisang, she was very understanding and supportive," Nita recounts. "She told me, though, that she still had upcoming projects for me."

As for the proposal, Nita didn't think twice. "I had found the right man. He was intelligent and kind. Well-educated. He placed seventh in the board exams for architects. Leandro Locsin and Bobby Mañosa were his contemporaries."

Throughout their married life, Nita shied away from the limelight, content to raise seven children—Gerard, Rafael Jr., Cecile, Roberto, Cristina, Reynaldo and Agnes.

By the time her children reached school age, the housewife, out of sheer boredom, picked up a new pastime: classical music.

Ironically, she never got to sing in musicals during her LVN days. "I lacked training then. But I've always loved singing. I was a student of Maestra Mercedes Matias-Santiago for 11 years. My teacher, in turn, studied music in Italy for 16 years."

By the time she made her operatic debut at the Philamlife Theater in 1990, she had earned the title coloratura soprano.

"My teacher was the prima diva during peacetime and among her admirers was President Manuel L. Quezon," she says. "She was very strict. She used to scold me until I wept buckets. But she taught me arias from Verdi's 'Rigoletto,' Puccini's 'La Boheme' and Rossini's 'The Barber of Seville.'"

Aside from her family, Maestra Mercedes proved to be her biggest fan.

"She watched all my performances," Nita relates. "In fact, I no longer told her of my last concert because she was in her 90s by then."

Inspiration

Still, Maestra Mercedes turned up during Nita's last recital at the AFP Theater in 2002.

"When I saw her, I almost choked and broke down," she says. "I couldn't sing. A year or so later, she passed away."

Also in the crowd that evening were LVN colleagues Delia, Sylvia and Luz Valdez.

That concert would've been more special if her husband were present, she says, but he had passed on four years earlier. Instead, her two granddaughters served as Nita's inspiration.

"I have seven children and seven grandchildren all in all," she enthuses. "Lucky seven!"

Weekends, her Manila-based children and grandkids visit. Weekdays she divides between friends and the church.

"I always hear Mass," she says. "I go to the three churches near my house and every Wednesday, I pray to Our Lady of Perpetual Help. That's all I do now—party with my family and friends and pray!"

RUSHES

AIDS
still exists

MIG A & Martin N in one show? But it's in LA!
JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

She sells colorful wigs. RUDY ESPERAS

SUSAN sees stars. RYAN LIM

YANG overwhelmed by *adobo*.
JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Is she worth it—in dollars?

IN ADDITION TO A SIX-DIGIT figure—in dollars—this popular singer asked for business-class air tickets and five-star accommodations for her entourage. She was being invited by an Asian government to perform for OFWs in that country's capital city.

No deal. The show was called off. Instead, they sent over some of their own stars to Manila.

Was the singer being too demanding? Some people who've heard think she's worth every cent. We're not naming her because fellow performers—green with envy—think otherwise.

Turning Japanese

Sharon Cuneta is learning Japanese. Why? Because KC speaks French.

"KC does the talking in Paris," Mega said. "I tried out a few phrases in Tokyo when we were there last year."

MiG & Martin

MiG Ayesa, the man with the moves, is teaming up with **Martin Nievera** for a show for Pinoys in Los Angeles.

Platonic

Gardo Versoza and **Lotlot de Leon** insist their relationship is platonic. Like this? **Amy Austria** and Gardo are former co-stars in GMA 7's "Sugo."

PALS Amy and Gardo JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Gimme five!

Not just one. **Susan Roces** was beside herself with joy when her star at the Walk of Fame in Eastwood City was unveiled.

Sal-tee-hee

Korean actress **Yang Mi Kyung**, who plays a cook in GMA 7's runaway hit Koreanovela, "Jewel in the Palace," sampled local dishes and singled out *adobo* because it was "a little too salty."

Rockin' Romeo

Pupil guitarist **Yan Yuzon** is a theater actor, too. He played the male lead in a recent production of "Romeo and Juliet." He says he's the spokesperson for **Ely Buendia**'s new band "because I can talk nonstop." In iambic pentameter, when necessary.

YAN *ang* talented.
RODEL ROTONI

Hair-raiser

Jennifer Sevilla sold colorful wigs during **Ruffa Gutierrez**'s celebrity *tiangge* for charity. Jen co-owns Mannequin Inc. with close friends.

"KOMBAN, watashi ..."
JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

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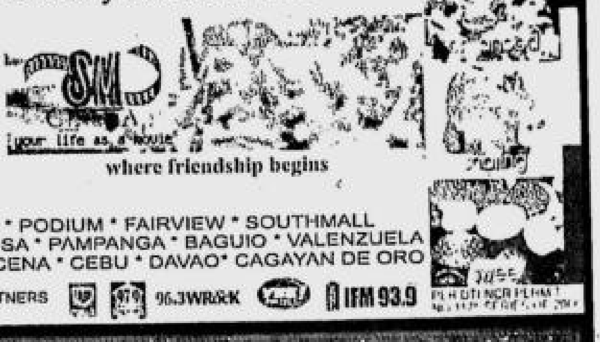

MEGAMALL * STA. MESA * MANILA * PODIUM * FAIRVIEW * SOUTHMALL
NORTH EDSA * SAN LAZARO * STA. ROSA * PAMPANGA * BAGUIO * VALENZUELA
MARILAO * MOLINO** BATANGAS * LUCENA * CEBU * DAVAO* CAGAYAN DE ORO

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SM Megamall Cinema 1

This RED CARPET PREMIERE is sponsored by Cheeky Curls & PIPOL Fish Chips.

METRO MANILA

PODIUM

NANNY McPHEE
02:00 FS / 02:25 MF / 04:35
06:45 / 08:25 LFS
09:00 LMF / 10:40 END

NORTH COUNTRY
12:40 FS / 01:05 MF / 03:40
06:15 / 8:25LFS
08:50 LMF / 11:00 END

SM MEGACINEMA

1 ULTRAVIOLET
11:15FS / 11:40 MF
01:40 / 03:40 / 05:40
040 LMF / 11:10 END
2 V FOR VENDETTA
3 THE DARK
4 RESERVED
5 SHE'S THE MAN
6 NANNY McPHEE
7 GLORY ROAD
8 SHAGGY DOG
9 16 BLOCKS
10 FINAL DESTINATION 3
11 FEARLESS
12 NORTH COUNTRY

SM CITY NORTH EDSA

1 NANNY McPHEE
2 GLORY ROAD
3 NORTH COUNTRY
4 RESERVED
5 FINAL DESTINATION 3
6 SHE'S THE MAN
7 V FOR VENDETTA
8 ULTRAVIOLET

SM CITY DASMARINAS

1 THE DARK
2 UNDERCLASS MAN
3 SHAGGY DOG
4 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE

SM CITY FAIRVIEW

1 16 BLOCKS
2 HOUSE OF FURY
3 THE DARK
4 V FOR VENDETTA
5 GLORY ROAD
6 SHE'S THE MAN
7 ULTRAVIOLET
8 NANNY McPHEE
9 FEARLESS
10 FINAL DESTINATION 3
11 CLOSE TO YOU
12 SHAGGY DOG

SM CITY STA. MESA

1 ULTRAVIOLET
2 V FOR VENDETTA
3 NANNY McPHEE
4 FINAL DESTINATION 3
5 SHE'S THE MAN
6 FEARLESS
7 GLORY ROAD
8 16 BLOCKS
9 NORTH COUNTRY
10 SHAGGY DOG

SM CITY BICUTAN

1 ULTRAVIOLET
2 HOUSE OF FURY
3 THE DARK
4 V FOR VENDETTA

SM CITY SAN LAZARO

1 SHE'S THE MAN
2 ULTRAVIOLET
3 V FOR VENDETTA
4 FINAL DESTINATION 3
5 GLORY ROAD
5 NANNY McPHEE

SM CITY MANILA

1 GLORY ROAD
2 V FOR VENDETTA
3 SHE'S THE MAN
4 ULTRAVIOLET
5 NANNY McPHEE
6 16 BLOCKS
7 SHAGGY DOG
8 FEARLESS
9 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
10 FINAL DESTINATION 3
11 THE DARK
12 NORTH COUNTRY

SM CITY SOUTHMALL

1 ULTRAVIOLET
2 16 BLOCKS
3 NORTH COUNTRY
4 V FOR VENDETTA
5 NANNY McPHEE
6 GLORY ROAD
7 SHE'S THE MAN
8 FINAL DESTINATION 3
9 FEARLESS
10 RESERVED

SM SUPERCENTER VALENZUELA

1 SHAGGY DOG
2 FINAL DESTINATION 3
3 HOUSE OF FURY
4 GLORY ROAD

SM CITY SUCAT

1 HOUSE OF FURY
2 ULTRAVIOLET
3 V FOR VENDETTA
4 16 BLOCKS

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LUZON

SM CITY BAGUIO

1 16 BLOCKS
2 SHAGGY DOG
3 THE DARK
4 V FOR VENDETTA

SM CITY MARILAO

1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 HOUSE OF FURY
3 SHAGGY DOG
4 THE DARK

SM CITY BATANGAS

1 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
2 THE DARK
3 FEARLESS
4 AEON FLUX

SM CITY BACOOR

1 FEARLESS
2 GLORY ROAD
3 V FOR VENDETTA
4 SHAGGY DOG
5 FINAL DESTINATION 3
6 SHE'S THE MAN
7 HOUSE OF FURY
8 BREAKING NEWS

SM CITY STA. ROSA

1 CASANOVA
2 FINAL DESTINATION 3
3 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
4 16 BLOCKS

SM CITY PAMPANGA

1 SYRIANA
2 SHAGGY DOG
3 FINAL DESTINATION 3
4 V FOR VENDETTA
5 THE DARK
6 16 BLOCKS

SM CITY LUCENA

1 FEARLESS
2 SHAGGY DOG
3 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
4 AEON FLUX

SM CITY MOLINO

1 SHAGGY DOG
2 HOUSE OF FURY
3 V FOR VENDETTA
4 CRY WOLF

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY CEBU

1 SYRIANA
11:30FS / 02:00 MF
04:30 / 07:00 / 09:10 LFS
09:30 LMF / 11:40 END
2 CASANOVA
11:15FS / 11:30 MF
02:00 / 04:30
07:00 / 09:15 LFS
09:30 LMF / 11:45 END
3 V FOR VENDETTA
11:30FS / 02:00 MF
04:30 / 07:00 / 09:15 LFS
09:30 LMF / 11:45 END
4 LAST HOLIDAY
5 CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
6 FEARLESS
7 NEW WORLD
8 HOUSE OF FURY

SM CITY ILOILO

1 FEARLESS
2 RESERVED
3 SYRIANA
4 CRY WOLF
5 V FOR VENDETTA
6 SHAGGY DOG
7 RESERVED
8 PRIDE & PREJUDICE

SM CITY DAVAO

1 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
2 GOAL
3 V FOR VENDETTA
4 FINAL DESTINATION 3
5 PRIDE & PREJUDICE
5 NEW WORLD

SM CITY CAGAYAN

1 NEW WORLD
2 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE
3 16 BLOCKS
4 YOUR'S MINE & OURS

SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MOVIE LISTING MTRCB RATING SCREENING SCHEDULES AND THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA

ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD CINEMAS MOVIE GUIDE

MOVIEWORLD

CINEMA ACCESS
635-5555
FOR ALL BRANCHES

www.robinsonsmovieworld.com

MOVIES/SCHEDULES/PRICES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

GALLERIA

632-9116

Cinema	Movie	Times
1	NORTH COUNTRY • THX	1:35 4:20 7:05 9:50
2	NANNY MCPHEE	1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00
3	GLORY ROAD	2:05 4:40 7:15 9:50
4	V FOR VENDETTA	1:20 4:10 7:00 9:50
5	ULTRAVIOLET	11:00 1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9:50
6	SHE'S THE MAN	12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00
7	CO-ED SCANDAL	1:00 3:10 5:20 7:30 9:40
8	CASANOVA	12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00
9	HOSTEL	1:10 3:20 5:30 7:40 9.50
10	BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN	1:30 4:20 7:10 10:00

ERMITA

536-7809 to 12

Cinema	Movie	Times
1	NANNY MCPHEE	10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50
2	HOSTEL	12:30 2:30
	V FOR VENDETTA	4:40 7:20 9:50
3	ULTRAVIOLET	10:20 12:20 2:20 4:20 6:20 8:25 10:00
4	CO-ED SCANDAL	10:40 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 9.50
5	SHE'S THE MAN	10:10 12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00
6	NORTH COUNTRY	12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00
7	GLORY ROAD	12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

METRO EAST

682-8193 • 682-8199

Cinema	Movie	Times
1	HOUSE OF FURY	1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00
2	NANNY MCPHEE	11:45 2:05 4.25 6:45 9.05
3	SHE'S THE MAN	1:40 4:00 6:30 9.00
4	V FOR VENDETTA	12:10 3:10 6:10 9:10
5	HOSTEL	1.00 3:00 5:00 7:000 9:00
6	CO-ED SCANDAL	12:15 2:00 3:45 5:30 7:15 9:00
7	GLORY ROAD	1:00 3:40 6:20 9:00
8	ULTRAVIOLET	12:10 2:25 4:40 6:55 9:10

NOVALICHES

935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 ULTRAVIOLET
2 GLORY ROAD
3 HOSTEL
4 V FOR VENDETTA
5 NANNY MCPHEE

CITISQUARE MALABON

288-2576

1 HOSTEL
2 TIGER BLADE
3 RESERVE
4 RESERVE

PIONEER

687-5378

1 NANNY MCPHEE
2 SHE'S THE MAN
3 ULTRAVIOLET
4 GLORY ROAD

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1 16 BLOCKS
2 CASANOVA
3 TIGER BLADE
4 BIG MOMMA'S HOUSE 2

LIPA

(043) 757-3664
(043) 312-5870

1 CASANOVA
2 SYRIANA
3 SHAGGY DOG
4 DATE MOVIE

DASMARIÑAS

(046) 852-2125
(046) 416-4332

1 DATE MOVIE
2 TIGER BLADE
3 V FOR VENDETTA
4 THE DARK
5 SHAGGY DOG

ANGELES

(045) 892-2348

1 SYRIANA
2 CASANOVA
3 FINAL DESTINATION 3
4 16 BLOCKS

IMUS

(046) 875-3838
(046) 471-8188

1 GLORY ROAD
2 HOSTEL
3 V FOR VENDETTA
4 HOUSE OF FURY

STARMILLS

(045) 875-1927
(045) 961-5270

1 TIGER BLADE
2 MURDER
3 SHAGGY DOG
4 V FOR VENDETTA
5 SYRIANA
6 THE DARK

BACOLOD

(034) 441-0453
(034) 441-0459

1 16 BLOCKS
2 DATE MOVIE
3 CASANOVA
4 GOAL
5 PRIDE AND PREJUDICE
6 V FOR VENDETTA

ILOILO

(033) 336-8070

1 V FOR VENDETTA
2 SHAGGY DOG
3 DATE MOVIE
4 PRIDE AND PREJUDICE
5 SYRIANA

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ENTERTAINMENT

ROUNDUP

RANDY Quaid

'Brokeback' suit

LOS ANGELES—Actor Randy Quaid has sued the studio and producers behind "Brokeback Mountain" for $10 million, saying he was underpaid for his supporting role in the acclaimed film.

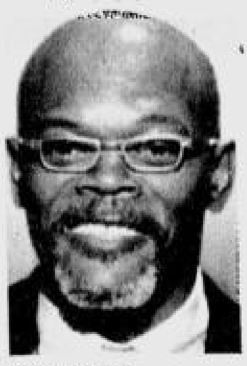
According to the lawsuit, filed on Thursday in Los Angeles Superior Court, producers tricked Quaid into appearing in the movie for what was "effectively a donation of his time" by "falsely representing it as a low-budget, art-house film with no prospect of making any money."

Quaid, 55, played the no-nonsense rancher who hires Jack Twist (Jake Gyllenhaal) and Ennis Del Mar (Heath Ledger) to tend his sheep on a Wyoming mountain, where the two men end up in a secret love affair.

The movie, which cost about $14 million to make, has grossed roughly $160 million at the box office worldwide.

The lawsuit says Quaid has a history of working at reduced rates in "experimental, nonmainstream" movies for the sake of art.

Reuters



JACKSON

'Penguins' spoof

LOS ANGELES—Actor Samuel L. Jackson has signed on to narrate an upcoming spoof of the Oscar-winning documentary "March of the Penguins" with an all-star supporting voice cast, independent studio ThinkFilm said on Friday.

"Farce of the Penguins," mixing archival wildlife footage with an R-rated screenplay written and directed by comedian Bob Saget, is aimed for a late-summer theatrical release, ThinkFilm spokesperson Alex Klenert said.

In press materials, ThinkFilm described "Farce of the Penguins" as the story of "one penguin's search for love while on a 70-mile trek with his libidinous buddies on their way to a hedonistic mating ritual."

Saget, who hosted the popular TV show "America's Funniest Home Videos" for several years, has also rounded up a group of well-known friends for cameo voice roles in the film. They include Jason Alexander, James Belushi, Norm Crosby, Whoopi Goldberg, Gilbert Gottfried, Jon Lovitz, Norm Macdonald and Abe Vigoda.

The original film, narrated by actor Morgan Freeman for the US release, chronicled the migrations of emperor penguins across the frozen wasteland of Antarctica to mate, lay their eggs and bear their young.

Reuters

'Housewives' video game

LOS ANGELES—Walt Disney Co.'s Buena Vista Games Inc. said it plans to release a PC video game based on the popular television show "Desperate Housewives" this fall.

In the game, players take on the role of a new Wisteria Lane housewife, who can uncover or create new scandals on the seemingly idyllic street where the show takes place.

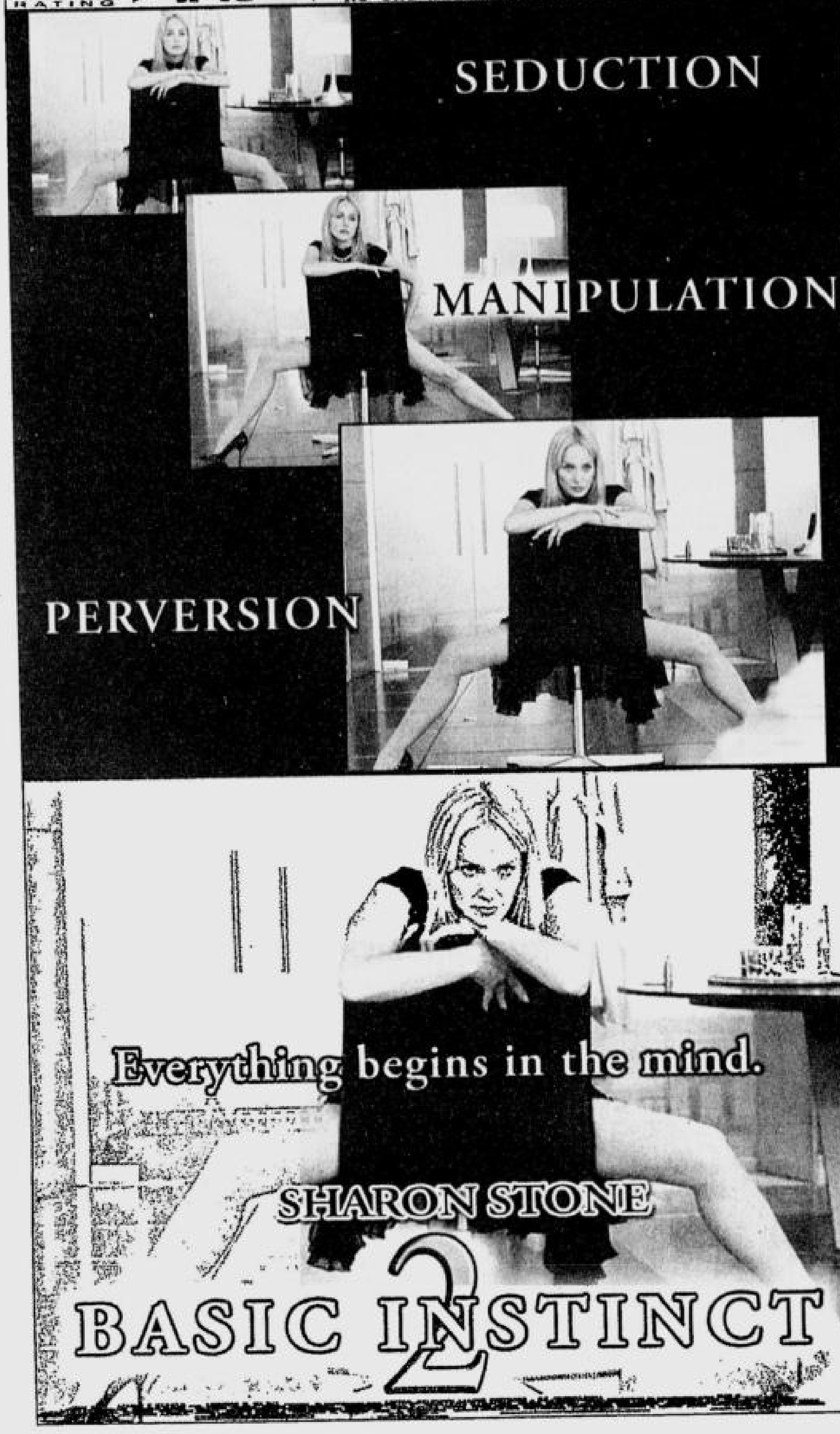
"Sometimes you just want to be more in that world than you can be on TV," said Mary Schuyler, the game's lead producer, who added that players will be able to pick their own in-game persona.

"You can be as nice or as mean as you'd like to be," she said.

Actress Brenda Strong, who is the voice of the show's deceased narrator, Mary Alice Young, has signed on to play a similar role in the game. Negotiations are in the works with other cast members.

Reuters

OPENS MARCH 29 IN THE FOLLOWING THEATERS:
GLORIETTA 1&4. GREENBELT 1&3. POWERPLANT. Shangri-La. Gateway. Festival. Alabang Town. Robinson's (ERMITA, GALLERIA, METROEAST, PIONEER, NOVALICHES,LETRE). CINERAMA. Goteco City. ROBEN. WalterMart MAKATI. Market-Market. EastWood. BLUEWAVE. Sta. Lucia. Starmall. ABC. All Mall. Greenhills. REMAR. Metropolis. Gotesco GRAND. Gotesco COMMONWEALTH. Masagana PASAY. (CEBU) Ayala. EMALL. Oriente. Cineplex. Cinema. (DAVAO) Gaizano. Victoria. JS. NCCC.



MTRCB RATING ▶ R-18 | Strictly for ADULTS No one below 18 yrs. old may be admitted

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4: Under Renovation
5: UltraViolet

METROPOLIS ALABANG star
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2: Date Movie
3: Ultraviolet
4: Fearless

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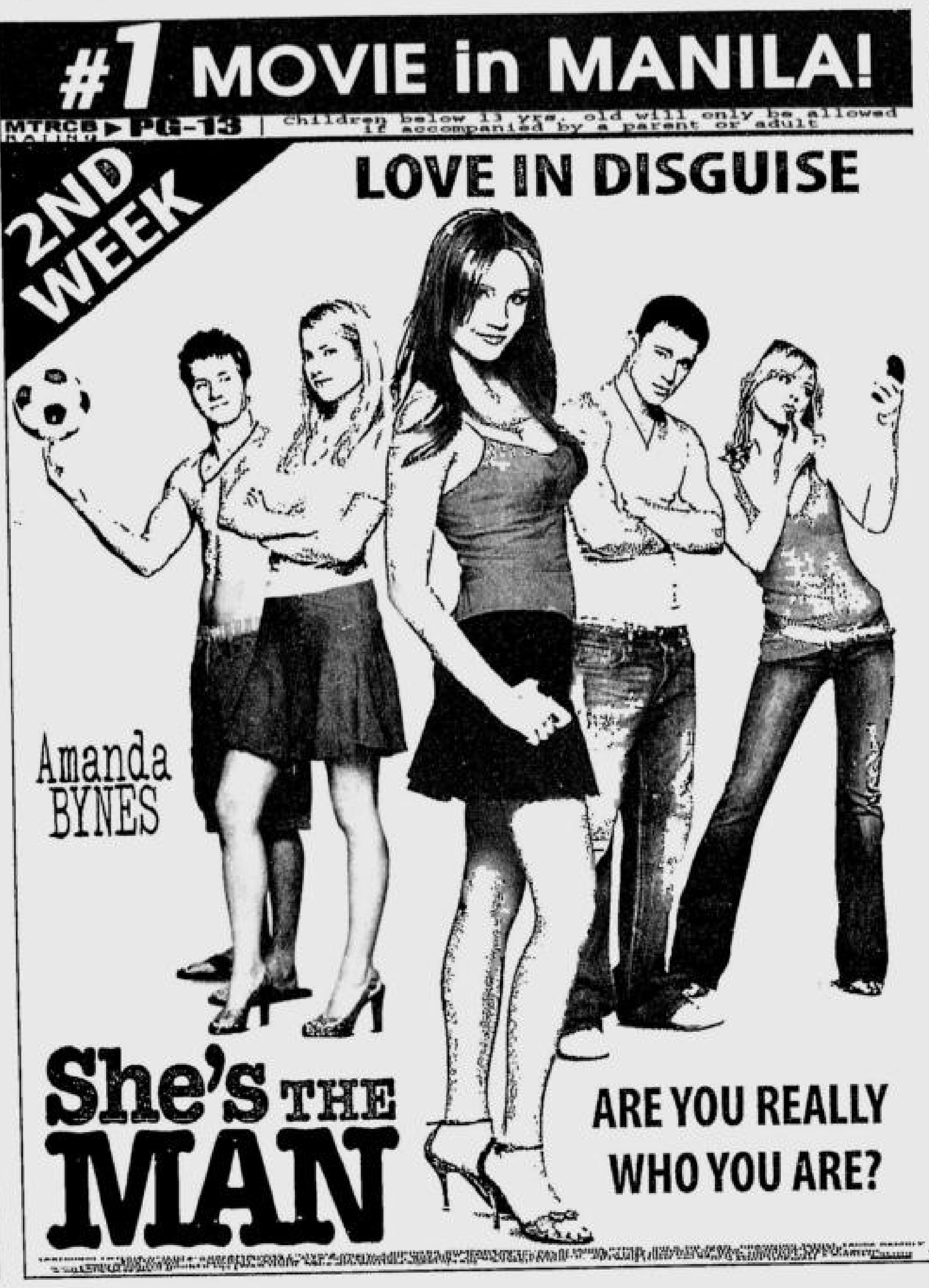
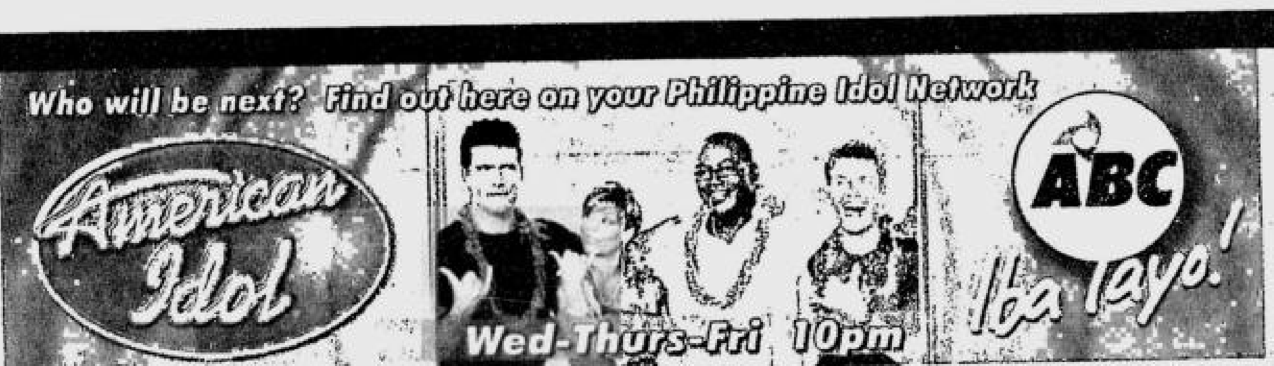
for movie schedules log on to www.clickthecity.com



#1 MOVIE in MANILA!
MTRCB RATING ▶ PG-13 | children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER TV GUIDE

Monday, March 27, 2006



Who will be next? Find out here on your Philippine Idol Network
American Idol
Wed-Thurs-Fri 10pm
ABC
Iba tayo!

ClickTheCity.com

[illegible]

Channel	2:30PM	3:00PM	3:30PM	4:00PM	4:30PM	5:00PM	5:30PM	6:00PM	6:30PM	7:00PM	7:30PM	8:00PM	8:30PM	9:00PM	9:30PM	10:00PM	10:30PM	11:00PM	11:30PM
ABC 5			WNCAA (Rerun)		Speed		TNA Impact		Sentro	How Clean Is Your House	ABC Action Movies				Big News	Fear Factor		Totoo TV	Insider
ABS-CBN 2	Kapamilya Cinema			Pasion de Amor	Little Amy	Mr. Bean	Naruto	Outstanding Twins	TV Patrol World		Gulong Ng Palad	Sa Piling Mo	Princess Lulu	Pinoy Big Brother		OK Fine Whatever			
AXN		The Karate Kid Part III					E Buzz	Cold Squad		Amazon		Maximum Exposure (Season II)		The 4400 (Season 2)		Lost (Season II)		House	
Cartoon Network	Johnny Bravo	Dexter's Laboratory	Tom & Jerry Show		Baby Looney Tunes	Codename: Kids Next Door	Foster's Home For Imaginary Friends	The Grim Adventures Of Billy & Mandy	Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	Power Rangers Wild Force	The Gransazers	Yu-Gi-Oh Double Duel		Powerpuff Girls		Mucha Lucha!	Duck Dodgers	Justice League	Samurai Jack
Cinema One		Galawgaw				Bagong Buwan				Wala Nang Iibigin Pang Iba				Got 2 Believe				Anghel Sa Lupa	
Cinemax	An Officer And A Gentleman				The Touch Of [illegible]			Purple Hearts (6:10 PM)				Out For Justice			No Secrets			Triggermen	
CNN				Business International		World News	World Sport	Larry King Live		Business International		World News Asia		World News	Living Golf	World News Asia		World News	World Sport
Crime/Suspense		What Should You Do?		Law & Order Special Victims Unit		Profiler		Forensic Files	Mastermind	Law & Order		Law & Order Special Victims Unit		Crossing Jordan		Bones		The Closer	
Discovery Channel				Monster Garage		The History Of Singapore		I Shouldn't Be Alive		Wild Discovery		Battlefield Detectives: Vietnam's Bloody Secret		American Chopper		I Shouldn't Be Alive		New Detectives	
Disney Channel	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	Totally Spies	Art Attack/Un-talkative Bunny	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Lilo & Stitch	Martin Mystery	Totally Spies	Kim Possible	Mr. Bean, The Animated Series	That's So Raven	Wonderful World Of Disney			Black Hole High	So Little Time	Mickey Mouse and Friends	Chip N Dale's Rescue Ranger	Wonderful World Of Disney	
ESPN		Pro Billiards '05 Men's World Summit of Pool		Pool: Snooker World Pool Masters '03 Holland		X-Games Files '04		Extreme Programming Sports Mania		In The Driver's Seat	Sportscenter Asia	Pro Billiards '05 WPPA Doubles 9-Ball C'ship		Table Tennis '04 [illegible] C'ships	Major League Baseball Division Series				
ETC		Project Runway		Change of Heart	Elimidate	Blind Date	Fifth Wheel	Seinfeld	Ambush Makeover	The Tyra Banks Show		Project Runway		Queer Eye For The Straight Guy		ET Weekend		Joan Of Arcadia	
EWTN	Benediction And Devotion Encore	Angelus (3:15 PM)	Bible Treasure Chest	Image Of God	St. Thomas More: Faithful Statesman	Rosary With Mother Angelica	Voices On Virtue	EWTN Gallery	The Catholic Faith & Vatican II	Sunday Night With Fr. Benedict Groeschel		Threshold Of Hope		Daily Mass (SAP) Live		Angelus (10:15PM)	Defending Life	Catholic Compass	
Fox News		Fox Report Sunday		Beltway Boys	Fox News Watch	Bulls & Bears	Cavuto On Business	Forbes On Fox	Cashin' In	Fox & Friends						Fox News Live			
GMA 7	Kung Mamahalin Mo Lang Ako	Now and Forever	First Love Of A Royale Prince		Dragonball Z	Great Teacher Onizuka	La Robe de Mariage	24 Oras		Extra Challenge	Majika	Encantadia	My Name Is Kim Sam Soon	Jewel In The Palace/Lagot Ka, Isusumbong Kita			Saksi		
Hallmark Channel	Bewitched	Child Of Our Time		Single Sis Seeks Mr. Class			Ladies Man	Bewitched	The Nanny	Strong Medicine		Judging Amy		Naughty Or Nice			McLeod's Daughters IV		Strong Medicine
HBO		Commando Squad			Out Of Bounds			Mard X			Caddyshack			The Forgotten			Innerspace		
Hero TV	Yakitate! Japan	Mr. Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Beyblade	Crush Gear Turbo	Gamburgar	Gosaurer	Raijin-Oh	Naruto	Mirmo de Pon	Inuyasha	Yu-Gi-Oh	Yakitate! Japan	Mr. Ajikko	D.I.C.E.	Samurai Deeper Kyo	Gosaurer	Raijin-Oh
IBC 13		EZ Shop				Home Shopping Network	IBC Express Balita	Krusada Kontra Krimen		Home Shopping Network		ME TV		PTA Best Of The Philippines		Global Family Series	IBC News Tonite	Home Shopping Network	
JackTV	The Daily Show With Jon Stewart	The Late Show David Letterman		Bottomline		Afterburn		X-Men Evolution	Jack Yard	Mad TV		That 70s Show	Family Guy	The Late Show David Letterman		Jack In The Box			
Lifestyle Network	Country Style	Interiors By Design	Decorating With Style	Decorating Cents	Moto Mario	Sweet Dreams	30 Minute Meals	Bill Boggs Corner	Unwrapped	Food 911	El Extra: Jackie Collins Presents: Hitched In Hollywood		NY Fashion Week	Life & Style		Radical Sabbatical	Genuine Article	It's Good To Be	Style Star
MTV Philippines	Rockola	MTV2: Korn's See You on the Other Side	Chart Attack		Viva La Bam	Pop Inc		2006 MAA Nominee Specials	MTV Hits			Massive	Get Spotted	TRL		The 70's House	Wild N' Out	Homecoming	VH1 Video Collections
MYX		Rock MYX	My MYX	Mellow MYX	Urban MYX	Take 5	MYXILOG		Star MYX	OPM MYX	Pop MYX	MYX Daily Top Ten				Urban MYX	My MYX	MYX Backtrax	MYXILOG
National Geographic	Africa From The Ground Up	Ultimate Survivor		Sea Of Snakes		Wildlife Diary	Planet Wild	Top 5		Wow!		About Asia		Terrorism Week: Bioterror Alert; Nat Geographic Specials: Animal Aging Secrets		In The Womb		Journey Into Amazing Waterworlds/The Land Reborn/The Big Top	
NBN		Teledyaryo Alas-Tres		Teledyaryo Sports Alas	Diyos Ko, Mahal Mo Ba Sila?	Teledyaryo		Tinig ng Bayan (Live)				Teledyaryo Final Edition		Dial M		Bantay OCW With Susan K			
Nickelodeon	Chalkzone	Hey Arnold!	SpongeBob SquarePants	My Life As A Teenage Robot	All Grown Up	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents	Drake & Josh	Naturally Sadie	Romeo	All That	All Grown Up	As Told By Ginger	Four Eyes	SpongeBob SquarePants	The Adventures Jimmy Neutron	The Fairly Odd Parents	My Dad The Rock Star	
PBO			[illegible]				Mga Taong Papel				Sekreta Ini				Ini Sa Magdamag				[illegible] Pilak
Qtv	Ikaw Lang Ang Mamahalin		Zentrix	The Prince Of Tennis	MMS (My Music Station)		Moms		Love At Aegean Sea	Irene	Mars	Laugh To Laugh: Ang Kulit	H3O Ha Ha Ha Over!		News On Q	[illegible]		Irene	Romance
RPN 9	TV Shopping					Global Window		Entertainment Tonight	The Insider	Scare Tactics	NBA On RPN					Newswatch Now	Global Window	Cargo For Truth	
SBN 21				New Life TV Shopping				Winner TV Shopping		SBN Music Video		Oras Ng Himala		Oras ng Katotohanan		SBN Music Video			
Solar Sports		WTA Indian Wells '06 Qfinals1				Boxing: Barrera vs. [illegible]				Sagupaan		NBA Game: Clippers @ Blazers					Sportsdesk	IBF '06 China Masters Finals	
Sports Plus									FIFA Preview Series 6	Gillette World Cup Preview 4	The Road to the Final Four	NCAA Regional Final 3				NCAA Regional Final 4			
Star Movies	The Hurricane (2:45 PM)					Welcome To Mooseport				[illegible] (7:10 PM)				Money Train				Agent Cody Banks (10:50PM)	
Star World		The Bold & The Beautiful		General Hospital		Angel		The Simpsons	Malcolm In The Middle	Star News Asia	Seinfeld	My Wife And Kids	Everybody Loves Raymond/Still Standing (Series 3)	King Of Queens	Frasier	Monk		Seinfeld	My Wife And Kids
Studio 23	Bewitched	Masked Rider Ryuki				Batman Beyond	Dragon Booster	Spirits	Pinoy Big Brother	Wazzup Wazzup	The Swan Season 2		Charmed (8:20 PM)	Lost (9:10 PM)		News Central	The West Wing		Travel Time

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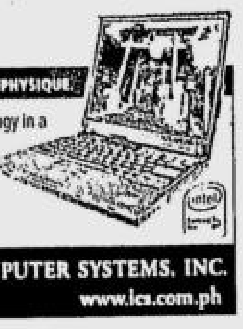

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BUSINESS

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PC BUYER'S GUIDE
The No.1
Computer Magazine
in the Philippines
2004 National Shoppers' Choice Awards

Peso rally to help gov't trim deficit

SOLGEN AT THE PSE
Newly appointed Solicitor General Eduardo Antonio Nachura (third from right) draws a round of applause from top Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) officials led by its chair Jose C. Vitug (rightmost) shortly after he rang the opening bell during a PSE visit on March 23. During his call, Nachura told PSE officials they should not hesitate to seek his help as he has pledged support to develop the local capital markets. Other PSE officials in photo are (from left): PSE Foundation chair Harry Liu, PSE director Conrado Bate, and Eddie Gobing, co-chair of the floor trading and arbitration committee.

S&P exec says impact on exporters minimal

By Doris C. Dumlao

CLARK, PAMPANGA—GLOBAL RATING FIRM Standard & Poor's sees the rising peso favoring the Philippines government's fiscal reform momentum and is thus a welcome development despite some trade-offs in terms of export earnings.

"Given the Philippines' external leverage, the peso appreciation is positive to the extent that it will reduce the cost of servicing external debt," S&P associate director for sovereign ratings Agost Benard said.

Benard was the guest speaker at the Economic Journalists Association of the Philippines-San Miguel Corp. business writing seminar here.

He cited government estimates that for every P1 appreciation against the dollar, interest payments would go down by more than P4 billion.

While some exporters may be getting hurt because of the peso appreciation against the dollar, he said the overall impact would

PESO/ B2

Another $6M needed to finish Naia 3

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE GOVERNMENT MUST SPEND at least $6 million more to complete the controversial Terminal 3 of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport and bring it to full operational status.

According to the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC), the additional funds will be sourced from the Manila International Airport Authority (Miaa), which oversees the operations of Naia.

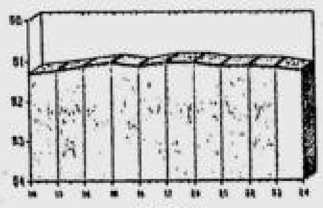
"There's still 2 percent which needs to be completed and we need about $6 million for that," Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza told reporters last Friday.

He declined to disclose details about the remaining work that needed to be done on Terminal 3, but described these as "just small items."

ANOTHER/B11

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES

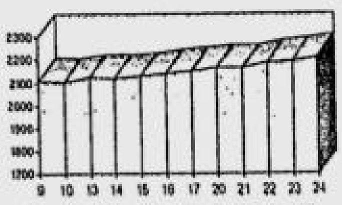


P51.26 = $1
As of 5 p.m., March 24, 2006

¥118.06 = $1
As of 5 p.m., March 24, 2006

GOLD: $549.60-550
per ounce Hong Kong, March 24, 2006

STOCK MARKET



(See stock market report on Page B6)

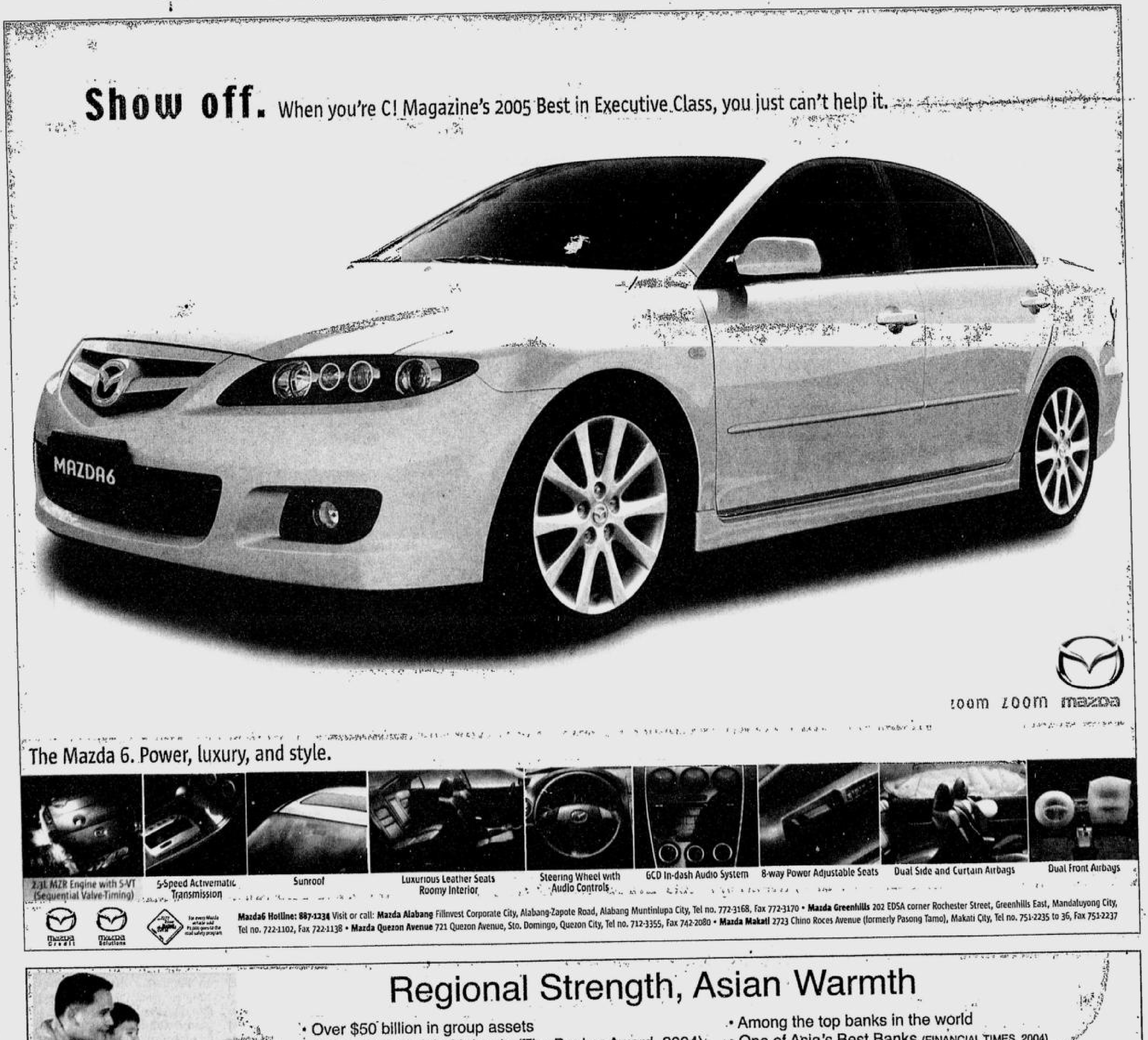
Profit-taking seen

THE OUTLOOK ON SHARE PRICES APPEARS mixed this week after the index breached key psychological ceilings last week, analysts said.

PROFIT-TAKING/ B11

WHAT'S INSIDE

Winston: Game over soon /B2
US gets lion's share of VCO trade /B5



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GMA-7 IPO to circumvent ban on foreign ownership

By Daxim L. Lucas

Shares to be bundled with depositary receipts

GMA NETWORK INC., METRO MANILA'S television ratings leader, will simultaneously sell its shares to the public along with depositary receipts that will allow foreigners to circumvent the ban on foreign ownership of local media entities.

The novel plan was revealed by GMA Network chair and president Felipe L. Gozon last Saturday in a media briefing where he explained the prospects of the firm.

"We will do it simultaneously to allow foreigners to participate [in the firm's initial public offering]," he said.

The 1987 Constitution prohibits foreigners from owning local media entities. Rival ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp. has listed Philippine Depositary Receipts, which allow foreigners to indirectly own its shares, but the scheme was introduced long after the company had offered its shares to the public via an IPO.

GMA Network's simultaneous IPO and depositary receipts listing is an indication of the confidence of the company and its underwriters on the attractiveness of the company to investors, especially after it had wrested the top ratings slot in Metro Manila from ABS-CBN three years ago.

Gozon said the IPO would push through in July and reaffirmed the commitment of GMA Network's three controlling families to sell at least 20 percent of their holdings to the public.

The IPO has been conservatively valued at P9 billion, although Gozon pointed out that the same 20-percent block will likely command a higher price now that the network has solidified its lead over its rival network.

Gozon declined to disclose revenue or net profit targets for 2006 although sources said that the company was looking at growth of between 15 to 25 percent for both.

The GMA chief said, however, that it was already "overloaded" with advertisements during its primetime slots and was increasingly burdened on its other time slots as advertisers continued to shift from ABS-CBN.

Because of this, the company's revenue growth will come mainly from higher ad rates.

"Growth will be through the increase in effective and negotiated rates," he said.

At the same time, however, the network is exploring new avenues of revenue growth like additional programming on its new QTV-11 UHF channel and its international channel, which already has 80,000 overseas Filipino subscribers since its launch last year.

Despite its plans to expand, Gozon ruled out any immediate acquisitions especially as the government moves to privatize Radio Philippines Network and the Intercontinental Broadcasting Co., which were seized from Marcos cronies in 1986.

"These companies have more liabilities than assets," he noted.

Winston: Game over soon

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

WINSTON GARCIA FLEW TO AN undisclosed overseas destination over the weekend reportedly to finalize details with his mystery—or "drunken," take your pick—buyer.

Before his departure, Garcia expressed confidence that the ownership row buffeting Equitable PCIBank would be resolved according to his game plan by next month.

The president of the Government Service Insurance System also disclosed that he would finally seek formal GSIS board approval this week for his proposal inviting the Social Security System, along with the SM/Banco de Oro Group, to a joint sale of their combined majority shareholdings in Equitable PCIBank.

Both SSS Chair Thelmo Cunanan and BDO president Nestor Tan have separately said their respective boards need a formal, binding offer from the GSIS before they could seriously appreciate Garcia's P95/share offer.

Garcia countered that he has not gotten the GSIS board approval first because he wants to privately secure the commitments of both SSS and SM/BDO Group before putting the terms in black and white.

Strangely, while Garcia was expressing confidence for the estimated P51-billion deal, key lieutenants in the SM/BDO camp were still unconvinced even as to the existence of Garcia's putative buyer.

Their consensus? Unfortunately, printing their analysis and description of certain principals could cost another libel citation.

Ernst & Young on the spot

A FORMER US partner of Ernst & Young has accused the accounting giant of illegally operating in the country and evading income tax payment on at least P120 million in Philippine government fees.

The whistleblower, Dale Strickland, gave his testimony in an ongoing civil suit he filed in the Makati Regional Trial Court against Ernst & Young and its former Philippine partner, Punongbayan and Araullo.

Strickland said Ernst & Young had already been fined more than $750,000 by the South Korean government over a similar tax-dodging offense and that was why he, assigned in Korea at that time, was sent to Manila in early 2002 to avoid similar complications.

Strickland said the P120 million in revenues for 2002-2004 came from the National Home Mortgage Finance Corp. alone, and did not include financial advisory fees received by Ernst & Young from Land Bank and Philippine National Bank.

Despite Ernst & Young's being penalized in South Korea, Strickland said he found it strange that his US firm "did not want to file any income tax return for me" as well as obtain a corporate tax account number to reflect its growing business in the Philippines.

Punongbayan & Araullo was implicated in the Makati suit after the local firm, smarting from being deserted by Ernst & Young in favor of SGV, balked at the revenue-sharing package that Strickland is trying to collect for his Philippine assignment.

Strickland submitted a total of 46 e-mails to the court to bolster his tax-evasion claim against his former US employer.

Audi zooms up

BUSINESSMAN Rafael Rufino was part of the original Proton/Audi dealership that was set up before the Asian currency crisis, but the parsimonious real estate developer acquired his first Audi, a slightly used A6 at that, only last month.

Rufino is one of the growing fans of the German marque, this year's recipient by the Financial Times "Best of Europe Business Awards," whose market presence in the country is being revved up, first by jettisoning its problematic distributor/dealer in favor of the aggressive PGA Cars.

The new partnership seems to be working; despite having started only in May 2005, PGA had sold close to 100 cars by yearend, as against the 20 sold by the previous distributor in 2004, its last full year of dealership.

Among the new A8 limo owners: a retail tycoon, an international port services operator and a newspaper owner.

Late this year, Audi will bring in its first-full sized SUV-offroader, the seven-seater Q7, priced head-on with the five-seater BMW X5. Expect spirited executive action.

Heard through the grapevine

FORMER Smart president/CEO Orlando Vea is set to rejoin the PLDT/Smart Group to head the telecom network's broadcast and Internet TV venture. With Vea back, could ex-Metro Pacific president Ricardo Pascua be far behind?

(Email: cocktales_pdi@pldtdsl.net or cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com)

Industrial park to rise in Clark

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

STATE-LED CLARK Development Corp. (CDC) sees at least $25 million in new investments this year particularly from a 228-hectare industrial park that will be developed over the next three years, CDC president Antonio Ang told reporters late Saturday.

In a training forum organized by the Economic Journalists Association of the Philippines and San Miguel Corp. at the Holiday Inn Clark, Pampanga, Ng said Peregrine Development International, led by Kuwait's ruling family Al-Sabah, would come in as the investor for the technopark and undertake its development.

The industrial park is envisioned to be a self-contained community industrial park within the Clark special economic zone.

The development of the park will require P1.3 billion or roughly $25 million. The industrial park is envisioned to generate 20,000 new jobs.

There are more than 37,000 workers in Clark. Approximately P35 billion worth of investments have been poured into Clark since the creation of the economic zone in 1993. These investments, however, are seen going down the drain if no legislative measures are undertaken to restore tax- and duty-free privileges for Clark investors, CDC said in earlier statements.

Peso rally to help …

From page B1

be favorable to the economy to the extent that it was reducing the government's debt service burden.

"I don't suppose that the peso appreciation would, as far as export growth and export growth potential, make any difference at all," Benard said.

"I don't think it has a material impact on the competitiveness of exports," he added.

Being price-takers in the global market for commodities, he said a rising peso would narrow down exporters' profit-margins.

"I think they can live with that," Benard said. "The way we look at things, the bottomline for us is the ability to service interest payments that become due every month."

Benard also told the business writing forum that S&P was not likely to raise its outlook on Philippine sovereign credit rating from "stable" to "positive" until further fiscal progress was made.

A change in outlook means that the government has a big chance of getting a credit-rating upgrade anytime within the next two years.

Among others, S&P awaits whether the government could generate its desired revenue collections from the expanded value-added tax.

For this year, the government aims to generate P78 billion from the VAT, the single fiscal reform seen as necessary to stabilize the government's fiscal position.

The VAT reform law, which breezed through many legal obstacles before finally being implemented, repealed many exemptions starting November last year and raised the VAT rate to 12 percent from 10 percent starting last February.

Benard noted that the main sovereign ratings constraints on the Philippines remained the high public and external debt, low fiscal flexibility due to a high interest burden, vulnerability to foreign investor sentiment arising from reliance on external funding, and a high contingent liability.

The government's guarantee on debts of state-owned corporations accounts for about 12 percent of gross domestic product and build-operate-transfer projects at around 6 percent of GDP.

A sovereign credit-rating is an opinion on the ability and willingness of a government to meet its debt obligations in full and on time, a forward-looking estimate of default probability.

S&P's BB- rating on Philippine sovereign debt stands three notches below the much-coveted investment grade.

A review team from S&P will visit the Philippines before June this year for the annual sovereign review.

When S&P raised its outlook on Philippine debt ratings to "stable" from "negative" last month, it cited the country's improved ability to maintain the fiscal consolidation needed to reduce its high public and external indebtedness while acknowledging that political risk persisted.

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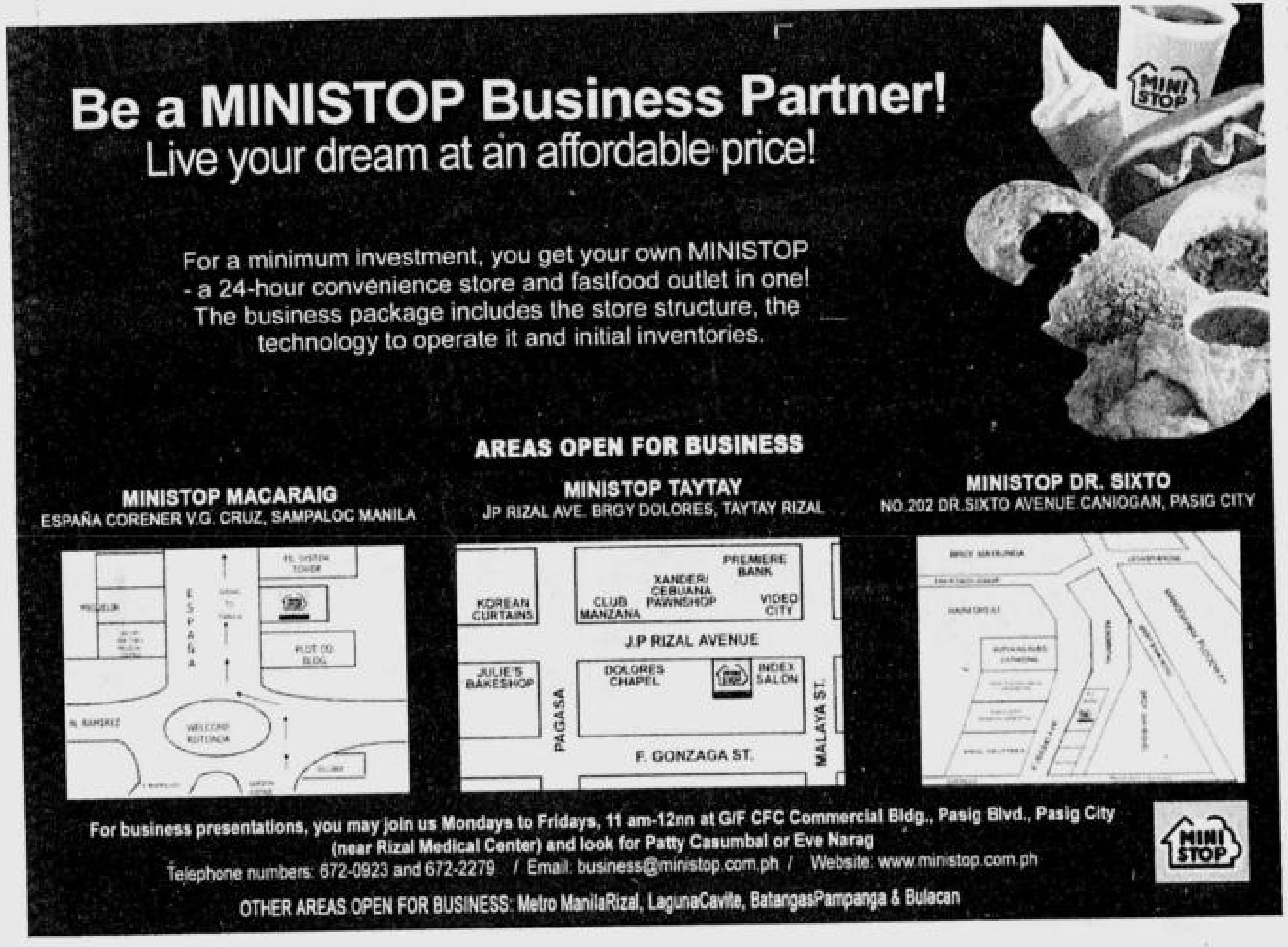
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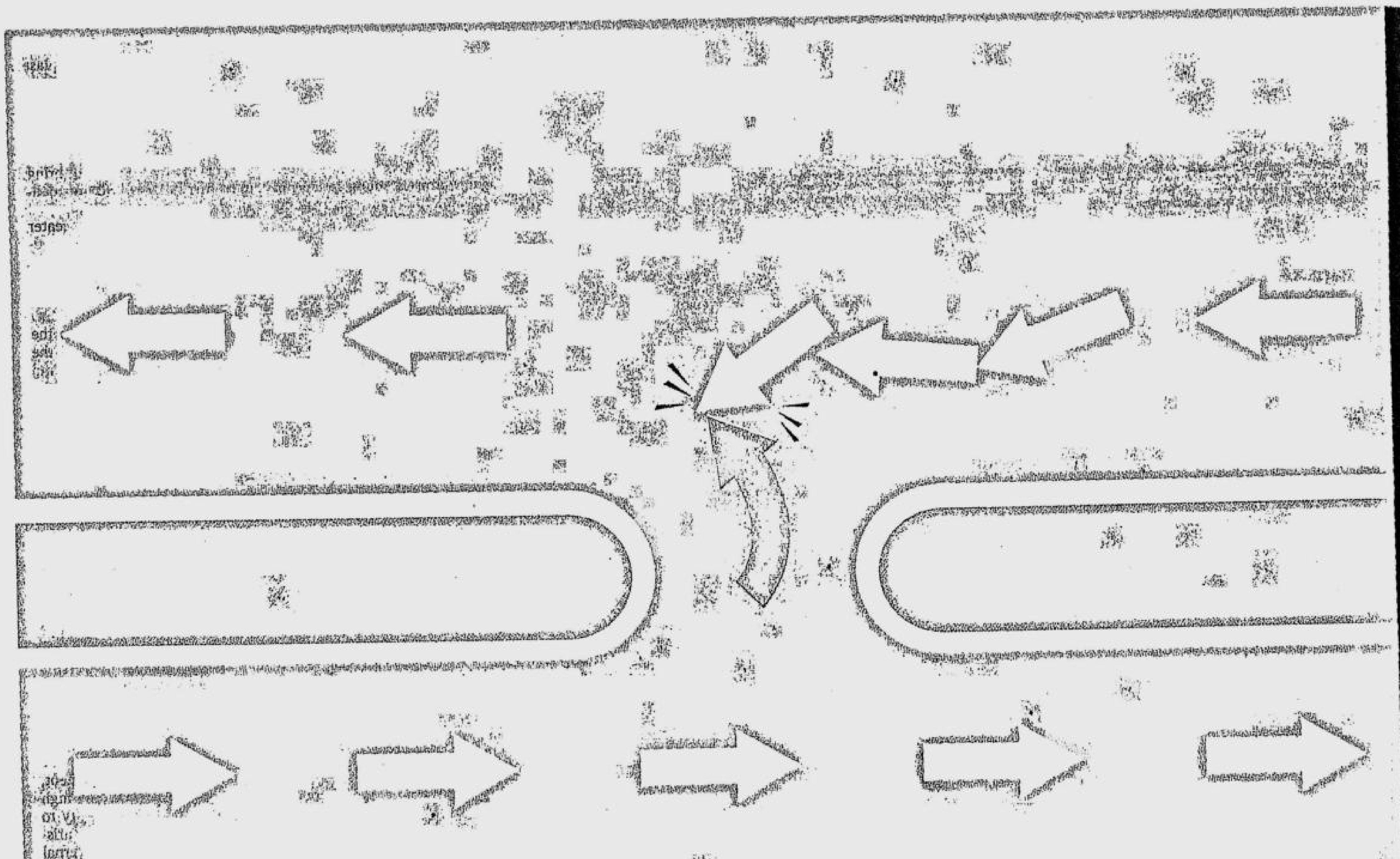

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BOO for driver's licenses

NO FREE LUNCH

Cielito F. Habito

REMEMBER WHEN YOU HAD TO RENEW your driver's license every year? Remember how upon renewal, all you'd get was the official receipt (OR) of the Land Transportation Office (LTO) stamped with "Valid as temporary license for 60 days"—and then you ended up going back for several 60-day extensions before you finally got the real thing?

All that is history now, we are told, except for some two dozen or so LTO branches around the country without reliable power or telephone lines. In fact, LTO recently earned an ISO 9001:2000 certification for the driver's license renewal process, apart from a couple of awards from private groups recognizing excellence in the application of information and communication technology (ICT) for public service and governance.

The questions people tend to ask are: Why only now? What took the agency so long? And why aren't other similar agencies doing the same thing?

Not just IPPs and MRT

The question could just as well be: why is our country so far behind our neighbors in quantity and quality of infrastructure?

The answer is the same: lack of funds has long been limiting government's capability to improve infrastructure vital to economic growth, and improve front-line services vital to public welfare.

I won't go into why there never are enough government funds for these things; I've been writing quite a lot about that in this space. What I'll highlight is how we can go around this limitation.

The answer comes in three letters: BOT. That is, build-operate-transfer—or other similar three-letter schemes that work on the same principle: get the private sector to put up the money to invest in the facility.

We used it to get out of the serious power shortages in the early '90s. We used it to provide the Edsa MRT commuter line. And we used it to build and rehabilitate the North and South Expressways.

What not too many people realize is that we can also use it, and in fact have already done so, to computerize government services as well.

The LTO system is the first such BOT project on ICT that is being implemented nationwide. And unlike most BOTs now in operation, this one was a solicited BOT project, which President Ramos had instructed DOTC to prepare way back in 1994.

How it works

The LTO computerization project is actually a BOO, i.e. build-own-operate, a variation on the original BOT scheme which involves transfer of ownership to government after the defined concession period.

In this case, the private investor (Stradcom Corp.) completely financed and built the facility, keeps ownership of the facility, and operates and maintains it through the 10-year concession period that may be renewed under the BOT Law.

Stradcom recovers its investment by collecting IT fees from the users of the facility. This is the P52.80 "Computerization Fee" you see on your LTO OR, and it is no different from the toll fee you pay every time you use the North or South Expressway. So what are you buying with your P52.80, which you now pay only once every three years? Plenty, actually.

Six objectives

Faster processing of LTO transactions is only one of six objectives addressed by the system. Now, one can renew her driver's license in an hour or less, and even do it in convenient locations like the Ayala MRT station, or SM-Cebu, among others. Another important goal has been to raise LTO's revenue collection, and here, the system seems to be more than paying for itself.

LTO's revenues underwent a clear dramatic upturn when the system was put in place, and not just because of the additional computerization fee itself. LTO collected about P9.5 billion in 2005, more than double the P4.3 billion it made in 2000.

It was the elimination of human discretion in setting, collecting and waiving penalties and fines that was the major factor, we are told.

A third goal was to provide prompt flow of information within the LTO system nationwide, enabling you to renew your license or car registration in any LTO branch office without further delay. The fourth objective was to have a reliable data warehouse on the land transportation industry, thereby improving the quality of statistics for research and law enforcement purposes.

The fifth goal is interconnectivity with other government agencies' information bases, which now makes it possible, for example, for BIR to know instantly if a taxpayer who claims a modest income actually has a fleet of cars registered under her name.

And the sixth aim was to reduce car theft and fraud. LTO field personnel equipped with PDAs can now instantly check the veracity of one's driver's license or car registration, much like US highway patrol units have been doing for many years.

Human factor

Note that issues concerning the drug test and eye test required for licenses, or on the emissions test and compulsory third-party liability insurance (CTPL) required for registration, are beyond the scope of the system. If you end up with fake insurance or feel cheated or overcharged with your drug test or eye test, or if these steps make the renewal process take more time than it should, blame it on people managing the whole set-up.

The computer system can't stop corrupt LTO officials from conniving with fly-by-night insurers or drug testing labs, for example.

By drawing in the private sector to fill in a void government can't fill, the BOO scheme achieved dramatic improvement on this particular front-line service at no additional cost to government.

For whatever flaws remaining in the system, save your "boo" for the human beings whose persistent bad habits still undermine it. *Comments welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu*

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US gets lion's share of VCO trade

RP steps up promotion of health product through trade shows

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE UNITED STATES HAS BEEN GOBBLING up shipments of virgin coconut oil (VCO) from the Philippines, prompting the government to step up efforts to promote the product this year, according to the Philippine Coconut Authority.

Data from the PCA show that the United States accounted for 93.9 percent of the 445 metric tons of VCO shipped out of the Philip-

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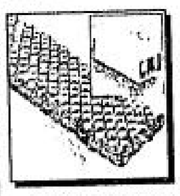

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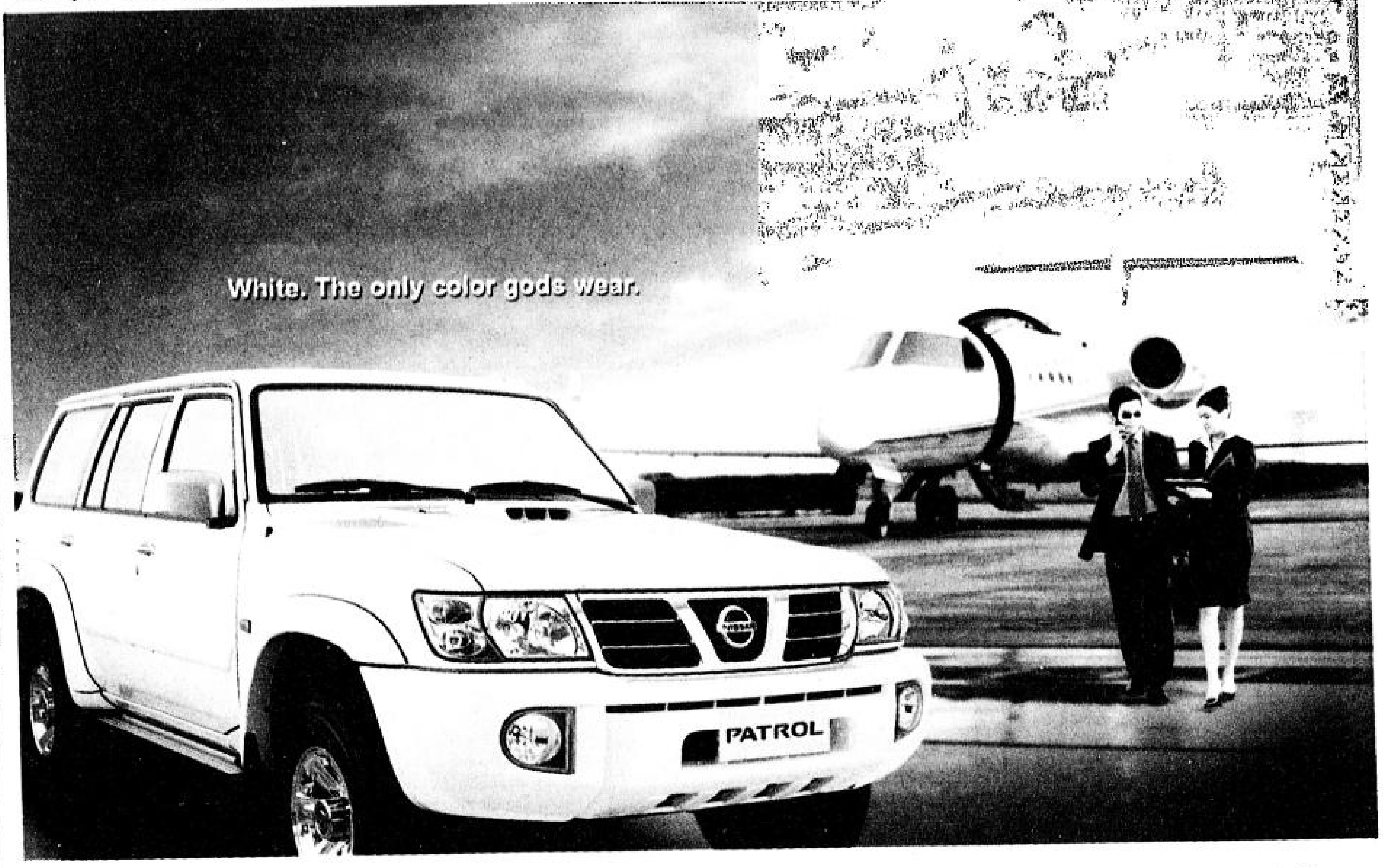

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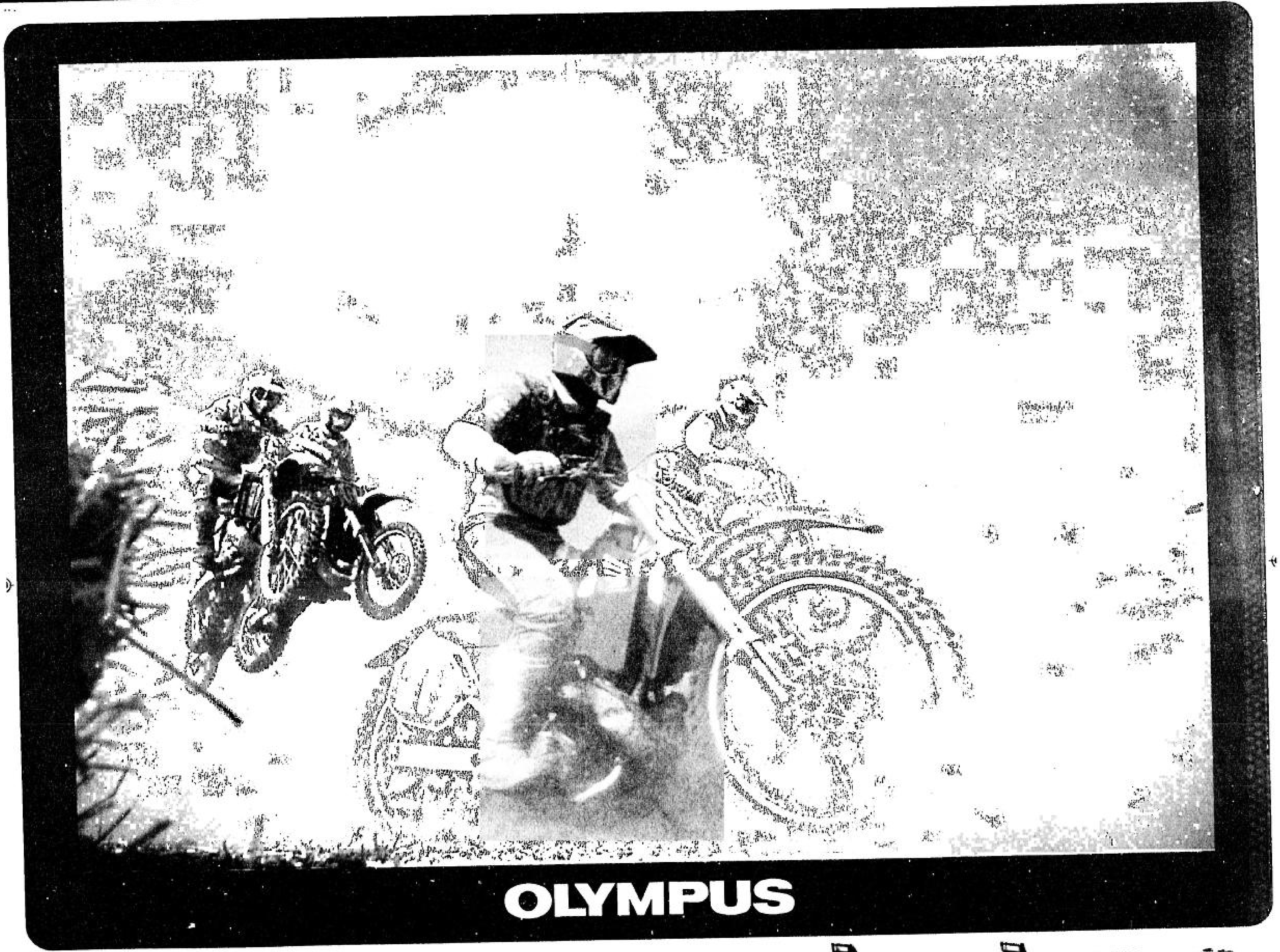

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Camp John Hay	220,000	170,000
Canlubang	500,000	400,000
Capitol Hills	60,000	-
Cebu Country Club	1,500,000	1,350,000
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Megaworld sees 30% jump in '06 profit

By Elizabeth L. Sanchez

PROPERTY DEVELOPER MEGAWORLD Corp. is upbeat about the prospects for its office and residential projects as it sees its net income surging 30 percent this year.

Megaworld chair Andrew Tan told reporters during a briefing late Friday that company revenues were expected to grow by at least 25 percent.

In 2005, Megaworld reported a 43-percent jump in net income to P1.15 billion from P808 million the year before. Revenues were also up 19.3 percent year-on-year to P5.32 billion.

This year, Megaworld expects its residential projects in Fort Bonifacio—Bellagio, Forbeswood Parklane and McKinley Hill Village—and The Residential Resort at Newport City at Villamor Air Base in Pasay City, to be major sales drivers.

Bellagio and Forbeswood Parklane are part of the P15-billion Forbes Town Center at the Global City. McKinley Hill Village, which offers fast-selling subdivision lots to a high-end market, is the first residential phase of Megaworld's 50-hectare McKinley Hill mixed-use project in Fort Bonifacio. The Residential Resort, meanwhile, is a low-density, 3.7-hectare community close to the Villamor golf course.

Ongoing residential projects contributed to the company's strong earnings performance in 2005. These included Eastwood Parkview, Grand Eastwood Palazzo and One Orchard Road in Eastwood City, Forbeswood Heights at the Bonifacio Global City in Taguig and Greenbelt Radissons and Greenbelt Parkplace in Makati.

In 2005, rental income also drove up revenues, which climbed to P547.8 million from P454.6 million in 2004. Megaworld's flagship project Eastwood City accounted for bulk of the rental earnings, with its Cyber One office building and City Walk 2 leisure strip posting strong occupancy levels last year.

The company has current assets of almost P15 billion.

Megaworld will also try to drum up interest from investors in Hong Kong, Singapore and London during a public offer of roughly 3.9 billion shares next month, officials said during the briefing late Friday.

Megaworld will offer up to 3.72 billion common shares to foreign investors and up to 196.15 million common shares to local investors. Around 588.5 million shares will be available under an over-allotment option.

"The offer (with the over-allotment) would translate to potential proceeds of between P5.4 billion to P6 billion for the company, which it can use to fund its growing list of projects," AB Capital Online said in a recent report.

Megaworld kicked off its domestic roadshow last Friday with several stockbrokers and institutional buyers present at the showroom of Forbes Town Center, one of Megaworld's prime township projects in Bonifacio Global City.

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Baguio Country Club	-	500 000
Camp John Hay	-	180 000
Canlubang Golf	500,000	Pls. Call
Canyon Woods	120 000	-
Capitol Hills	50 000	-
Cebu Country Club	1,500,000	1,350 000
Celebrity Sports	120,000	100 000
City Sports Club Cebu	-	380,000
Club Filipino	110,000	-
Eagleridge A/B*/C**	330,000*	150,000/Pls. Call*/350,000**
Eastridge A/B*	Pls. Call	-
Evercrest	65,000	-
Fairways & Bluewater	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Forest Hills A/B*/C**	120,000/200,000*	150,000*
Luisita Golf	Pls. Call	300 000
Manila Golf Corporate	Pls. Call	11,500,000
Manila Golf Individual	Pls. Call	11,000,000
Manila Polo	Pls Call	Pls Call
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PREMIERE AUCTION

April 8, 2006 9:00 am to 12:00 noon, Gabaldon Hall, Club Filipino
Eisenhower Ave. cor. Club Filipino Ave., Greenhills, San Juan

as low as **5%** DOWNPAYMENT · payable up to **10 yrs** · as low as **9.75%** INTEREST

ANTIPOLO, RIZAL

PREM_ANT 001 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 1,000 sqm.
Quezon Ave., Ext., BRGY. SAN JOSE, Antipolo
Min. Bid Price: P 8,000,000.00

PREM_ANT 002 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 132 sqm.
Interior Rd. JOSEFINA SUBD. Mambungan
Min. Bid Price: P 641,450.00

PREM_ANT 007 VACANT LOT
L.A. 300 sqm.
Alaska St., PALOR VERDES EXEC. VILL.
Phase 1-A dela Paz, Antipolo
Min. Bid Price: P 1,500,000.00

PREM_ANT 012 VACANT LOT
L.A. 171 sqm.
Pound St., LORES SUBD., Balimbing
Min. Bid Price: P 427,500.00

ANGONO, RIZAL

PREM_ANG 003 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 1,617 sqm. F.A. 1,734 sqm.
Aurora Ave. cor. Macopa St., AURORA SUBD.
San Isidro, Angono
Min. Bid Price: P 13,505,380.00

PREM_ANG 004 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 480 sqm. F.A. 116.25 sqm.
Bayabas St., AURORA SUBD.
Brgy. San Isidro, Angono
Min. Bid Price: P 2,000,000.00

PREM_ANG 005 VACANT LOT
L.A. 304 sqm.
Aurora Ave. cor. Mangga St.,
AURORA SUBD. Brgy. San Isidro, Angono
Min. Bid Price: P 1,100,000.00

PREM_ANG 006 VACANT LOT
L.A. 240 sqm.
VILLAGE EAST, Brgy. San Isidro
Min. Bid Price: P 400,000.00

CALOOCAN

PREM_CAL 015 VACANT LOT
L.A. 1,000 sqm.
BO. BAGUMBONG
Min. Bid Price: P 2,000,000.00

CAINTA, RIZAL

PREM_CNT 008 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 187 sqm. F.A. 204 sqm.
Vicenta St., cor. Cora St., MARICK SUBD.
Min. Bid Price: P 654,500.00

LAS PIÑAS

PREM_LSP 014 RESIDENTIAL BLDG.
L.A. 300 sqm. F.A. 182.5 sqm.
Circle Gall St., SANTOS VILL. Pulang Lupa I
Min. Bid Price: P 1,600,000.00

MANILA

PREM_MAN 016 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 140 sqm. F.A. 360 sqm.
A. Almeda St. QUERICADA, Tondo
Min. Bid Price: P 1,816,000.00

MAKATI

PREM_MAK 017 RESIDENTIAL CONDO
F.A. 49 sqm.
CITYLAND and DELA ROSA Condominium
Min. Bid Price: P 1,600,000.00

PREM_MAK 018 VACANT LOT
L.A. 50 sqm. F.A. 50 sqm.
Lots Nos. 4B & 4C, Blak na Bato St.,
Kalayaan Ave., OLYMPIA
Min. Bid Price: P 1,100,000.00

PREM_MAK 019 OFFICE CONDO
F.A. 38.33 sqm.
MAKATI EXEC. CENTER CONDO
Alfonso St. cor. Herrera St.
Min. Bid Price: P 2,200,000.00

MARIKINA

PREM_MRK 009 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 279 sqm. F.A. 335.75 sqm.
Yellow Stone Park St., cor. Overland Park St.
PARKLAND ESTATE SUBD. Malanday
Min. Bid Price: P 2,000,000.00

PREM_MRK 010 VACANT LOT
L.A. 283 sqm.
J.P. Rizal St., cor. Butihin St., CONCEPCION
Min. Bid Price: P 2,000,000.00

MONTALBAN, RIZAL

PREM_MNT 013 VACANT LOT
L.A. 574 sqm.
YAKAL ST. Brgy. San Jose Rodriguez
Min. Bid Price: P 1,050,000.00

MUNTINLUPA

PREM_MUN 020 VACANT LOT
L.A. 432 sqm.
Orchids St., SOUTH GREENHEIGHTS
Min. Bid Price: P 1,700,000.00

QUEZON CITY

PREM_QC 021 VACANT LOT
L.A. 1,329 sqm.
Amor St., HILLTOP SUBD.,
Pasong Putik, Novaliches
Min. Bid Price: P 3,300,000.00

PREM_QC 022 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 694 sqm. F.A. 200 sqm.
DIAMOND SUBD., Brgy. Kaligayahan, Novaliches
Min. Bid Price: P 3,532,500.00

PREM_QC 023 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 109.70 sqm.
K-VILLE TOWNHOMES, Cenacle Drive
Culiat Tandang Sora
Min. Bid Price: P 2,600,000.00

TAGUIG

PREM_TAG 024 RESIDENTIAL LOT w/ IMPRV.
L.A. 113 sqm. F.A. 219 sqm.
Aquino St., UPPER BICUTAN
Min. Bid Price: P 1,564,350.00

PREM_TAG 025 VACANT LOT
L.A. 201 sqm.
Int. J.P. Rizal St., Juan Luna, USUSAN
Min. Bid Price: P 804,000.00

TAYTAY, RIZAL

PREM_TAY 011 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 155 sqm. F.A. 130.50 sqm.
Ma. Clara St., & Pag-asa, BRGY. STA. ANA
Min. Bid Price: P 1,465,000.00

VALENZUELA

PREM_VAL 026 SCHOOL
L.A. 287 sqm. F.A. 190 sqm.
Jasmin St. DE CASTRO SUBD., Paseo de Blas
Min. Bid Price: P 2,000,000.00

PREM_VAL 027 SCHOOL
L.A. 287 sqm. F.A. 190 sqm.
Int. MAYSAN ROAD
Min. Bid Price: P 33,000,000.00

PREM_VAL 028 VACANT LOT
L.A. 150 sqm.
Armsterdam St. VISTA VERDE NORTH
Phase 1-E Brgy. Llano
Min. Bid Price: P 450,000.00

BULACAN

PREM_BUL 029 VACANT LOT
L.A. 2,387 sqm.
Camias San Miguel Road, SAN MIGUEL
Min Bid Price: P 2,000,000.00

PREM_BUL 030 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 554 sqm. F.A. 55 sqm.
Mercado Ext. cor. Daang Bakal,
BRGY. TIAONG PULONGGUBAT, Guiguinto
Min. Bid Price: P 1,000,000.00

PREM_BUL 031 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 1,030 sqm. F.A. 90 sqm.
Sampagutahan St., BRGY. SAN VICENTE, Sta. Maria
Min. Bid Price: P 1,300,000.00

PREM_BUL 032 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 1,100 sqm.
Int. San Marcos Rd., BRGY. SAN MARCOS, Calumpit
Min. Bid Price: P 400,000.00

PREM_BUL 033 VACANT LOT
L.A. 729 sqm.
Buencamino St., BRGY. SAN JOSE, San Miguel
Min. Bid Price: P 900,000.00

CAVITE

PREM_CVT 034 VACANT LOT
L.A. 300 sqm.
GREEN VALLEY SUBD., San Nicolas Bacoor
Min. Bid Price: P 450,000.00

PREM_CVT 035 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 200 sqm. F.A. 159 sqm.
Queensview St. Area A QUEENSROW SUBD.,
Brgy. Molino Bacoor
Min. Bid Price: P 1,200,000.00

PREM_CVT 036 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 387 sqm. F.A. 567.82 sqm.
Trinidad St. SAN ISIDRO VILL., Pamplona 1
Min. Bid Price: P 3,860,000.00

PREM_CVT 037 VACANT LOT
L.A. 249 sqm.
Cityland Ave. CITYLAND GREEN BREEZE VILL.
6 Brgy. Biclatan, Gen. Trias,
Min. Bid Price: P 249,000.00

PREM_CVT 038 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 150 sqm. F.A. 90 sqm.
Poblacion 2, GMA
Min. Bid Price: P 630,000.00

PREM_CVT 039 VACANT RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 477 sqm.
CITYLAND HEIGHTS Bo. Ulong Tubig, Carmona
Min. Bid Price: P 954,000.00

PREM_CVT 040 VACANT RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 332 sqm.
CITYLAND GARDEN BREEZE VILLAGE VI,
Brgy. Biklatan, Trias
Min. Bid Price: P 232,400.00

PREM_CVT 041 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 200 sqm. F.A. 88 / 49 sqm.
BRGY. STO. NIÑO (Area 1) Bagong Bayan
(DBB), Dasmariñas
Min Bid Price: P 800,000.00

PREM_CVT 042 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 180sqm.
VILLANUEVA SUBD., Brgy. Real, Salinas, Bacoor
Min. Bid Price: P 998,100.00

PREM_CVT 043 VACANT LOT
L.A. 595 sqm.
Ruby St., STATELAND SUBD., Buenavista, Gen. Trias
Min. Bid Price: P 714,000.00

LAGUNA

PREM_LGN 044 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 310 sqm. F.A. 186 sqm.
Peras St. cor. Lanzones St. GRACIA SUBD.
Bgy. San Antonio Biñan
Min. Bid Price: P 800,000.00

PREM_LGN 045 VACANT LOT
L.A. 200 sqm.
Muñoz Compound BRGY. CASILE Biñan
Min. Bid Price: P 400,000.00

PREM_LGN 046 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 250 sqm. F.A. 160 sqm.
P. Zamora St., Brgy. San Miguel
Poblacion, MAJAYJAY
Min. Bid Price: P 900,000.00

PREM_LGN 047 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 1,000 sqm. F.A. 918 sqm.
MONSERATT SUBD. Brgy. Callos
Sto. Angel Norte Sta. Cruz
Min. Bid Price: P 7,076,815.00

PREM_LGN 048 VACANT LOT
L.A. 366 sqm.
Narra St. cor. Dapdap and Antipolo Sts.
MONSERATT SUBD. Callos Sto. Angel Sta. Cruz
Min. Bid Price: P 2,000,000.00

PREM_LGN 049 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 1,000 sqm. F.A. 257.75 sqm.
Purok 3 Masapang National H-way
BRGY. MASAPANG VICTORIA
Min. Bid Price: P 4,000,000.00

PREM_LGN 050 VACANT LOTS
SPRING HOMES SUBD., Phase III
Brgy. Bucal, Calamba

LOT AREA	MIN. BID PRICE
a) 102 sqm.	P282,906.00
b) 105 sqm.	P291,227.00
c) 130 sqm.	P360,567.00
d) 192 sqm.	P532,529.00

CALL NOW! Monday to Sunday, 7:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M.
Tel. Nos. 534-9686; 534-9725 • Cellphone No. 0921-6722888

SHOW MONEY P25,000.00 CASH OR MANAGERS CHECK. ALL PROPERTIES FOR SALE ARE ON AN "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS". PROPERTIES & PRICES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGES WITHOUT PROIR NOTICE. THE BANK RESERVES THE RIGHT AT ANYTIME TO PULL OUT, TO CORRECT ERRORS IN PRICES, TERMS, DETAILS & STATUS OF THE PROPERTIES IN THE EVENT OF DISCREPANCIES ARE DISCOVERED.

AUCTION POWERED BY: PROPERTY FORUM PHILS., The No. 1 Property Auctioneer In The Country.

Semirara net profit up 11%

COAL PRODUCER Semirara Mining Corp. said its net profit last year rose 11 percent to P1.6 billion from the previous year's restated net profit of P1.4 billion on higher coal prices.

In 2005, average coal prices increased by 12 percent to P2,205 a metric ton from P1,974 the year before.

Revenues also grew 10 percent to P5.6 billion from P5.1 billion.

Production increased to a historic level of 2.9 million metric tons, up 16 percent over the previous year's 2.5 million metric tons due to additional production and support equipment deployed under its continuing expansion and modernization program.

Sales volume, however, dipped slightly by 34,000 metric tons or 1 percent to 2.48 million metric tons in 2005 from 2.51 million metric tons in 2004 largely because of the prolonged maintenance shutdown at the National Power Corp.'s second coal fired power plant in Calaca, Batangas.

Deliveries to Calaca in 2005 dropped by 16 percent to 1.22 million metric tons from 2004 sales volume of 1.45 million metric tons.

But the company increased deliveries to Napocor's independent power producers operating the power plants in Sual, Pangasinan, and in Pagbilao, Quezon.

Sual and Pagbilao posted higher volumes of 147,000 metric tons and 61,000 metric tons, respectively.

Likewise, non-Napocor customers increased their purchases by 95,000 metric tons. *Elizabeth Sanchez*

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of March 24, 2006)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
FINANCIAL					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	36	36.5	35.5	35.5	418,600
Bank of the Phil. Islands	63	64.5	63	63.5	1,003,200
China Banking Corp.	680	685	680	685	3,510
Citystate Savings Bank	19	19	19	19	300
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.41	0.41	0.4	0.4	9,280,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	79.5	83	79.5	82	312,300
International Exch. Bank	28	28.5	28	28.5	41,900
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	38	40	38	40	2,718,100
Philippine National Bank	34	36.5	34	36.5	176,600
Phil. Savings Bank	35	35	35	35	20,000
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	13.25	13.5	13.25	13.25	65,000
Security Bank Corp.	41	42	41	42	3,244,600
Union Bank of the Phil.	37	40.5	37	40	146,100
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
First Metro Invest. Corp.	24.5	24.5	24	24.5	2,900
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	150	150	150	150	210
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2130	2135	2130	2135	250
Ivantage Corp.	0.84	0.84	0.84	0.84	5,400,000
INDUSTRIAL					
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
First Gen Corp.	42	42.5	42	42.5	796,600
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	45	45.5	44	44	813,600
Manila Electric Co. A	13.25	13.25	13	13	64,700
Manila Electric Co. B	20	20.5	20	20.25	246,100
Manila Water Co. Inc.	6.5	6.5	6.4	6.4	1,785,000
Petron Corp.	4.6	4.6	4.5	4.5	3,259,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.9	0.91	0.9	0.91	380,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
CADP Group Corp.	2	2	2	2	30,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	19.25	19.25	19	19.25	12,800
Jollibee Foods Corp.	38.5	38.5	38	38	8,500
Pancake House Inc.	3.65	3.75	3.65	3.75	110,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.42	2.7	2.42	2.6	3,548,000
San Miguel Corp. A	60	60.5	60	60.5	187,900
San Miguel Corp. B	81.5	82	81.5	81.5	22,400
Universal Robina Corp.	18	18	17.75	18	3,028,600
Vitarich Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	1,050,000
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	0.31	0.32	0.31	0.32	5,850,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	1.52	1.54	1.5	1.52	4,616,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	4.15	4.2	4.15	4.2	650,000
Republic Cement Corp.	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9	50,000
CHEMICALS					
Euro-Med Lab. Phil. Inc.	2.85	2.85	2.85	2.85	50,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Global Equities Inc.	0.07	0.0725	0.07	0.07	4,200,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	1,700,000
Steniel Manufacturing	0.65	0.69	0.57	0.61	7,010,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	48,000,000
Ayala Corp.	360	367.5	360	365	409,850
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.51	0.51	0.51	0.51	110,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	5.1	5.2	5.1	5.1	106,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.024	0.024	0.024	0.024	4,500,000
A. Soriano Corp.	2.44	2.46	2.44	2.44	296,000
APC Group Inc.	0.225	0.24	0.225	0.24	6,500,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	1,000,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	0.88	0.89	0.88	0.89	790,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	8.7	8.7	8.7	8.7	45,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.02	1.06	1	1.02	7,511,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	2.95	3.05	2.95	3	2,558,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	3.05	3.15	3.05	3.05	1,557,000
House of Investments Inc.	1.24	1.3	1.24	1.26	837,000
JG Summit Holdings Inc.	5.9	6.2	5.9	6.1	3,474,000
Medco Holdings	0.24	0.24	0.215	0.215	170,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	200,000
Pacifica	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	5,000,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.26	0.27	0.26	0.26	8,950,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.55	0.57	0.55	0.57	1,100,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.14	0.15	0.14	0.145	28,390,000
SM Investments Corp.	230	231	228	229	565,460
Seafront Resources Corp.	0.53	0.56	0.53	0.56	210,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.13	0.14	0.13	0.135	6,880,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	10.75	11	10.75	11	5,238,200
Belle Corp.	1.1	1.16	1.1	1.16	15,476,000
A Brown Company Inc.	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	300,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.26	0.3	0.26	0.29	11,040,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	1.94	1.98	1.9	1.9	3,874,000
C&P Homes Inc.	1.8	2	1.8	1.8	181,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.22	0.225	0.22	0.225	6,180,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	300,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.6	0.67	0.6	0.65	181,900,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.031	0.034	0.031	0.033	21,800,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.71	0.72	0.71	0.71	2,020,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.36	1.44	1.36	1.36	10,802,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.075	0.075	0.075	0.075	200,000
Gotesco Land Inc. B	0.07	0.075	0.07	0.075	200,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	3.4	3.5	3.3	3.5	245,000
Interport Res.	0.0048	0.005	0.0048	0.005	40,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.005	0.0055	0.005	0.005	76,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.225	0.24	0.225	0.23	2,340,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.55	0.58	0.55	0.58	2,330,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.017	0.017	0.017	0.017	2,000,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.48	1.56	1.48	1.52	18,702,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.33	0.35	0.33	0.35	64,080,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.31	2,890,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	7.8	8.1	7.8	8.1	2,274,000
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.31	0.35	0.31	0.35	16,840,000
SM Development Corp.	1.52	1.62	1.52	1.58	2,073,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	8	8	7.9	7.9	1,921,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.155	0.155	0.15	0.155	4,010,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	12.25	12.25	12.25	12.25	30,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.98	1.06	0.98	1.04	21,300,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	890	895	890	895	12,150
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	2.95	3.05	2.95	3.05	5,473,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	1875	1880	1870	1880	227,200
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	1,000,000
Imperial Res.	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	8,000,000
Ionics Inc.	1.26	1.28	1.26	1.26	207,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.047	0.047	0.047	0.047	1,000,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.0525	0.0525	0.0525	0.0525	100,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.12	1.12	1.1	1.1	80,000
Philweb Corp.	0.023	0.023	0.022	0.022	46,600,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	1.94	1.94	1.94	1.94	155,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	11	11.5	11	11	1,711,500
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.99	0.99	0.97	0.97	450,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.3	1.38	1.3	1.38	17,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	1.86	1.86	1.86	1.86	1,991,000
Manila Jockey Club	3	3	3	3	10,000
Philippine Racing Club	3	3	3	3	6,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.42	0.47	0.4	0.45	10,010,000
EDUCATION					
Ipeople Inc.	3.2	3.25	3.2	3.25	48,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	1.58	1.58	1.56	1.58	220,000
Paxys Inc.	8.9	9	8.8	8.9	651,000
Philcomsat Holdings Corp.	0.82	0.92	0.82	0.92	100,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	1.16	1.16	1.1	1.12	535,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	1.36	1.36	1.3	1.34	991,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	0.0065	100,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	6.9	7	6.8	6.8	833,000
Benguet Corp. A	7	7	7	7	15,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.215	0.215	0.205	0.205	8,820,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.26	0.27	0.26	0.27	4,760,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.017	0.018	0.017	0.018	12,700,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.026	0.026	0.026	0.026	11,900,000
Omico Corp.	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	0.0055	325,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	2.26	2.3	2.24	2.28	6,188,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	2.3	2.34	2.28	2.32	5,525,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	25.5	26	25.5	26	76,200
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.29	0.3	0.29	0.3	1,590,000
Vulcan Ind'l	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	20,000
OIL					
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.26	0.27	0.26	0.27	3,540,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	0.0075	5,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	0.0085	4,000,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	30,000
PREFERRED					
PLDT (10% Pref) Series C	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	500
PLDT (10% Pref) Series F	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series G	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	4,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series H	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series I	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series J	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	3,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series K	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	6,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series L	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	1,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series N	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	700
PLDT (10% Pref) Series S	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	400
PLDT (10% Pref.) Series U	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	4,500
PLDT (10% Pref) Series V	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	4,600
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	8,300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	2,400
WARRANTS, PHIL. DEPOSIT RECEIPTS, ETC.					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	12.5	12.5	12	12	89,000

CURRENCIES

March 26, 2006 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.835352	1.000000	51.1540
Japan	Yen	0.007085	0.008482	0.4339
United Kingdom	Pound	1.449252	1.734900	88.7471
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.107661	0.128881	6.5928
Switzerland	Franc	0.634284	0.759301	38.8413
Canada	Dollar	0.716979	0.858295	43.9052
Singapore	Dollar	0.515713	0.617360	31.5804
Australia	Dollar	0.596510	0.714082	36.5282
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.216670	2.653576	135.7410
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.222737	0.266638	13.6396
Brunei	Dollar	0.514126	0.615460	31.4832
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000092	0.000110	0.0056
Thailand	Baht	0.021370	0.025582	1.3086
UAE	Dirham	0.227461	0.272294	13.9289
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.197100	61.2365
Argentina	Peso	0.271571	0.325098	16.6301
Brazil	Real	0.388481	0.465051	23.7892
Denmark	Kroner	0.134023	0.160439	8.2071
India	Rupee	0.018801	0.022507	1.1513
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.226413	0.271039	13.8647
Mexico	New Peso	0.076613	0.091714	4.6915
New Zealand	Dollar	0.520858	0.623519	31.8955
Norway	Kroner	0.125417	0.150137	7.6801
Pakistan	Rupee	0.013890	0.016628	0.8506
South Africa	Rand	0.131963	0.157973	8.0810
Korea	Won	0.000856	0.001025	0.0524
Sweden	Kroner	0.106981	0.128067	6.5511
Syria	Pound	0.016092	0.019264	0.9854
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.025673	0.030733	1.5721

MALAMPAYA CONSORTIUM

First Gas settles dispute over supply agreement

MANILA ELECTRIC CO. (MERALCO) CONsumers are expected to benefit from lower rates arising from the recent settlement deal between First Gas Power Corp. (FGPC), FGP Corp. (FGP) and the Malampaya Natural Gas Consortium (SC 38) composed of Shell Philippines Exploration B.V, Shell Philippines, Chevron Malampaya, and PNOC- Exploration Corp.

FGPC and FGP settled and signed agreements last March 22 with the Malampaya Natural Gas Consortium to resolve disputes on their Gas Sales and Purchase Agreements (GSPAs). The Malampaya consortium supplies natural gas to FGPC's 1,000-MW Sta. Rita power plant and FGP's 500-MW San Lorenzo plants in Batangas.

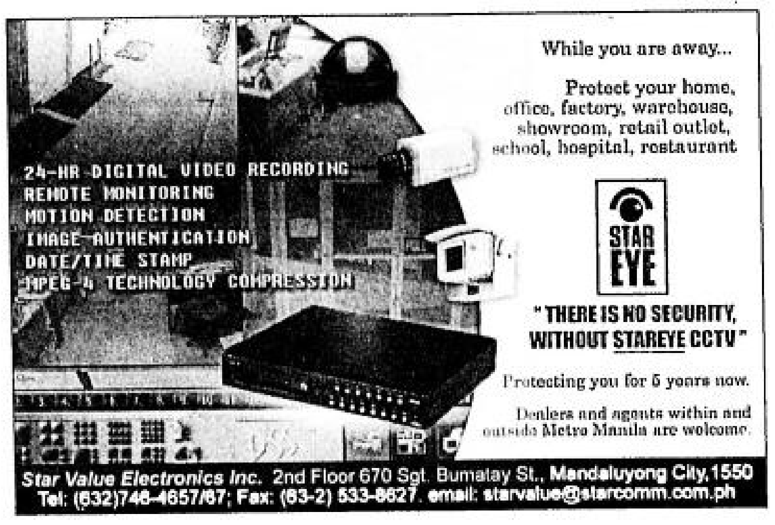
From an initial $231.5 million, FGPC and FGP were able to lower the payment claims of the Malampaya consortium to $148 million, resulting in an initial savings of $83.5 million. The payment claims were further reduced to $134.7 million as another $13.3 million was deducted as payment for the gas used in excess of its contracted quantity in 2005. Thus, total savings due to the settlement deal reached $96 million.

"The settlement deal would mean lower costs to end-consumers if Meralco taps FGPC and FGP to generate more electricity beyond its annual contracted volume," said Peter D. Garrucho, First Gas Holdings Corp. vice-chair and CEO.

The lower costs will come from the substantial savings obtained because of the settlement deal and because it is marked against lower natural gas prices in 2002 to 2004. It can be noted that the purchase of fuel for power generation is a pass-through charge to end-consumers. Thus, any savings on fuel costs translate to lower rates for consumers.

The settlement also gave FGPC and FGP a payment deferral. FGPC and FGP will pay on a quarterly basis until December 2009. FGPC and FGP will be entitled to a "banked gas" corresponding to the payments made under the settlement. The agreements also allow FPGC and FGP to prepay all or part of the outstanding balance. The settlement will take effect once the agreed conditions and precedents of the agreements are satisfied.

The agreements were signed by Garrucho and First Gas senior vice president Richard Tantoco, SPEX managing directors Keith Perrin and Paul van der Harten, Chevron Malampaya operations manager Romeo Solis, and PNOC-EC president Eduardo V. Mañalac.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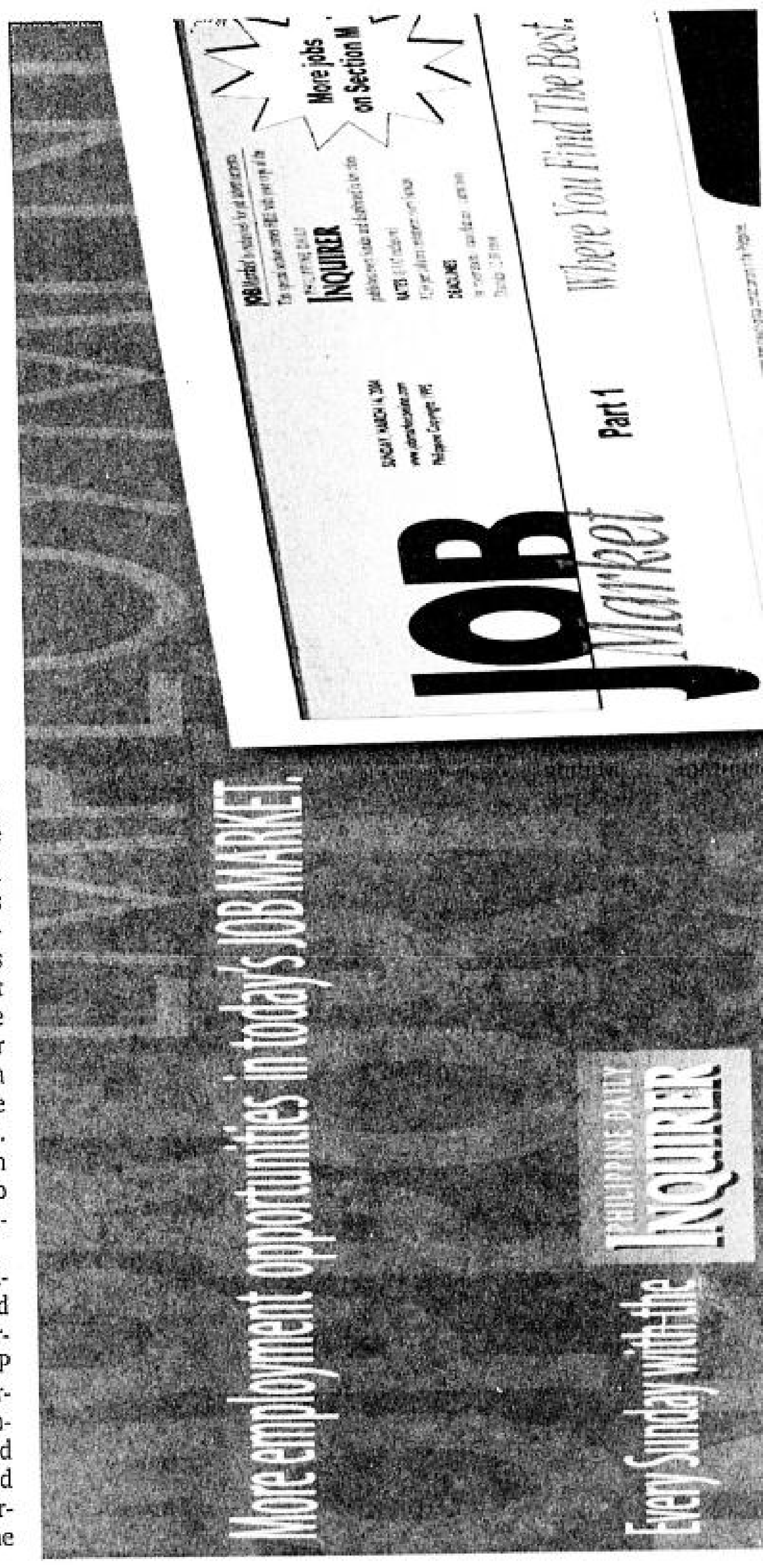
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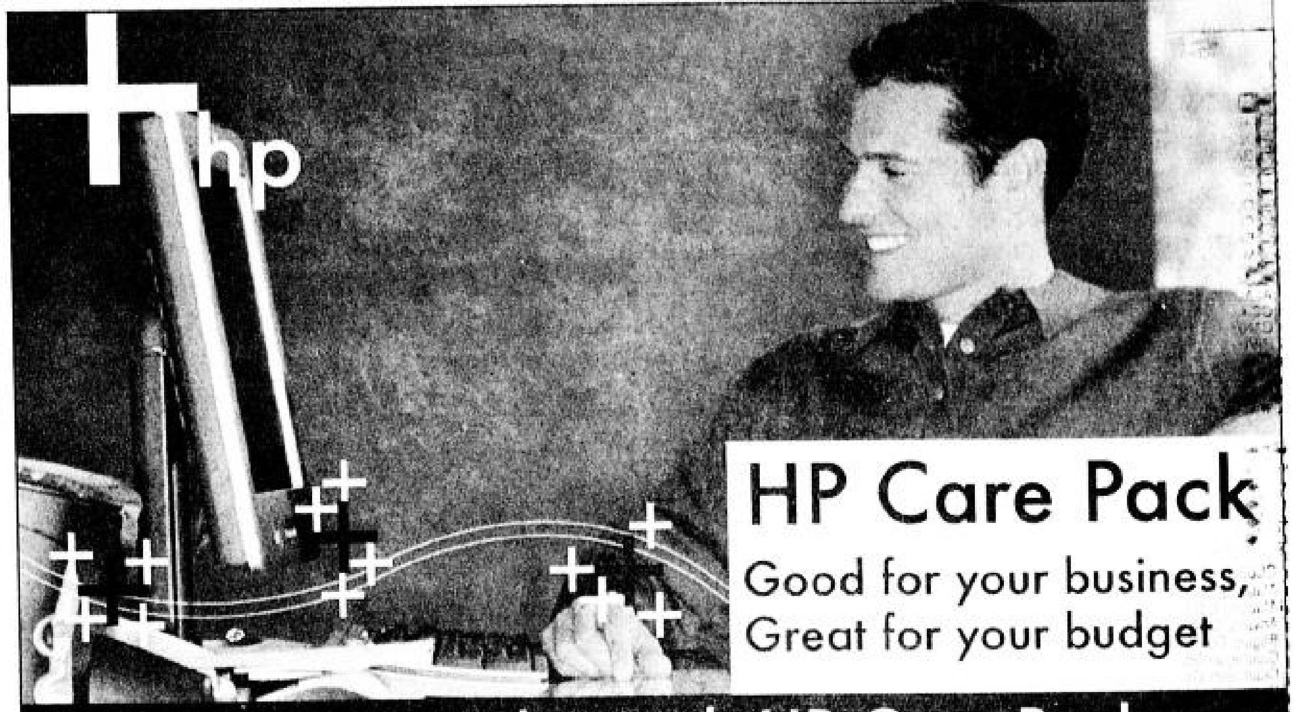
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FOREIGN DEMAND RISING

Bright prospects seen for organic, herbal goods

By Ronnel W. Domingo

INDUSTRY GROUPS, GOVERNMENT and international development agencies yesterday pushed for the promotion of organic and herbal products.

The sectors were seen having bright prospects with annual growth rates pegged at between 10 percent and 15 percent.

Ranier B. Villanueva, president of the Chamber of Herbal Industries of the Philippines Inc., said during the monthly Good News Kapihan that the market was "as big as the ocean" and that companies had vast opportunities for growth.

Villanueva said his own firm, Raniers Research and Development Institute Inc., was branching out in the United States to become the first and only small-scale herbal company to put up a manufacturing facility there.

Villanueva, who is a neurosurgeon as well as a pharmacist and medical technologist, said RRDI had recently firmed up a partnership with a Malaysian firm to put up a similar factory in Kuala Lumpur.

"We are also working on plans to get into the European and Middle East markets," he added.

The doctor said that the global herbal products industry was expected to grow to a trillion-dollar market within 10 years or much faster than the 25 years that it took the rapidly-growing information technology industry.

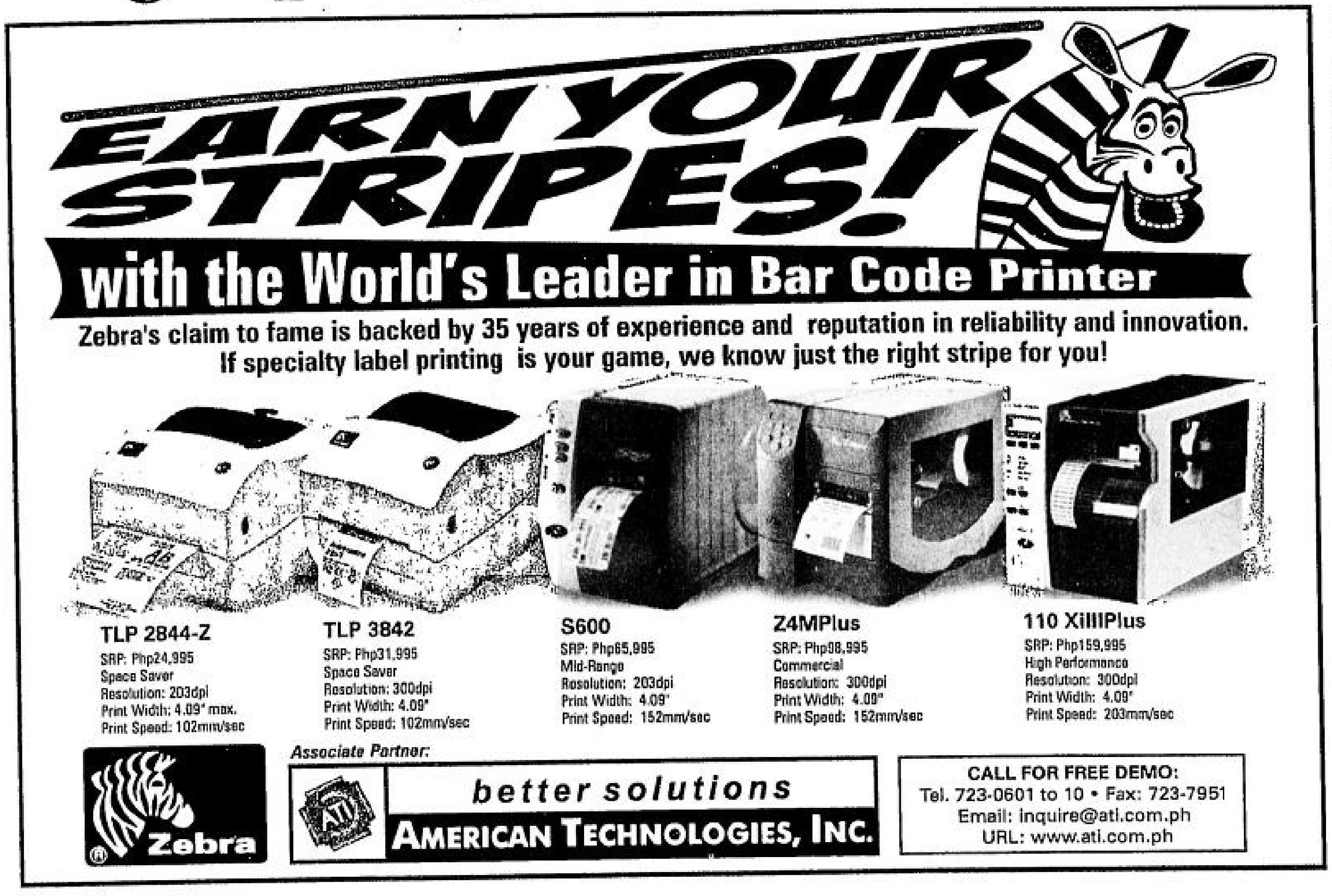
However, Villanueva said the local industry needed support from the government particularly in the area of putting regulations in order so that the sector could take off with minimal obstacles.

Girlie R. Sarmiento, who is in charge of the Department of Trade and Industry's efforts to promote the industry, said wide avenues were opening up for companies to tap local and overseas markets.

"For instance, the Japanese government is holding for the first time a trade exhibition for organic and wellness products in June," Sarmiento said. "This shows that the sector is fast becoming established in mature markets."

"The organizers have allowed three Filipino companies to take part for free, but the Center for International Trade Exhibitions and Mission is currently working on securing space for a fourth participant," she said.

BRIGHT/B11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What do we do with a problem like Fidel Ramos?—II

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES

Honesto C. General

LAST JAN. 2, I WROTE why a former president like Fidel Ramos should stop talking against a sitting president like Gloria Macapagal Arroyo.

First, Ramos must have left more than a few skeletons in some Malacañang closet; surely, he wants that closet kept shut.

Second, a sitting president, with enormous resources, knows more about a problem of the country than any other creature on earth.

And third, by staying in the limelight, Ramos risks having the failings of his presidency brought out into the open once again. He wouldn't want that, would he?

But Ramos cannot keep his mouth shut. The other day, he was on a podium again. He called on the country's political leaders—especially those in the opposition—to stop encouraging the intervention of the already politicized Armed Forces in their fight.

Please note: Ramos did not complain that the AFP is politicized. He complained that both the administration and the opposition were wooing the AFP to join the fray.

It is far too late for Ramos to show his concern for the AFP. When Joseph Estrada became president, his Secretary of Defense, Orly Mercado, found the Retirement and Separation Benefits System (RSBS) hopelessly bankrupt.

The sorry state of the financial affairs of the military pension fund (into which P500 million of military payroll is contributed every year) can be blamed on Ramos. When he was chief of staff of Marcos and later Cory Aquino, he approved every investment of the pension fund.

When he was president, he knew what was wrong with RSBS and did nothing about it. Today, the National Treasury covers the annual shortfall of the pension fund, thereby worsening the deficit.

When Fort Bonifacio was sold during the Ramos presidency, P8 billion of the proceeds were set aside to modernize the AFP. Somehow, the money was never spent. The House investigated the deal to no avail.

To this day, the money remains unaccounted for. As a result, the AFP is far from being the modern fighting unit it was meant to be. Can Ramos plead ignorance or innocence?

Ramos said that had President Arroyo not lifted Proclamation No. 1017 a week after declaring a state of emergency, the country might have ended up embroiled further in political turmoil. It is absolutely useless to speculate what might have happened had the president not lifted 1017 when, in fact, she did lift it.

Then, Ramos turned economist. He said rising oil prices (but pump prices have been going down), creeping inflation, sagging export markets and mounting joblessness are hurting the economy.

He noted that the Asian Development Bank (ADB) scaled down the gross domestic product growth from 5 percent to 4.8 percent versus the government's official projection of 5.7 percent. In the light of the political turmoil, these figures are not too bad.

Ramos said that our neighbors are posting higher GDP growth rates. Comparing GDP growth rates is always an iffy enterprise. A long time ago, the insurance commission stopped comparing growth rates of the insurance industries of Southeast Asian countries. There was hardly any basis for comparison.

WHAT/B13

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Gov't plans bond swap

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE ARROYO ADMINISTRATION IS SET TO embark on a fresh bond swap involving foreign currency-denominated government bonds or ROPs to boost trading liquidity of benchmark securities, riding on the success of a similar swap involving local issuances.

Banking sources said the government met with several investment banks last week to formulate a global bond swap.

National Treasurer Omar Cruz said he himself was keen on more bond swaps in the future: "Regardless of who is secretary of finance or treasurer, the bond exchange is like a good therapy. It's a cleansing thing. Everyone needs an executive check up."

The last time the government did a global bond swap was in 1996, or prior to the Asian currency turmoil, which retired about $680 million worth of outstanding Brady bonds.

"I'm looking at all of those," Cruz said when asked whether a foreign bond swap program was in the works.

Asked which ROP maturities would likely be boosted through a fresh bond swap, Cruz said: "That will have to be determined quantitatively. We'll have the inefficiency (of certain maturities) computed. But the strategy is there. We'll do it at the proper time."

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	as of 3/16/2006	as of 3/23/2006
Philamlife Fixed Income Fund	1.2653	1.2772
Philamlife Equity Fund	1.1918	1.2184

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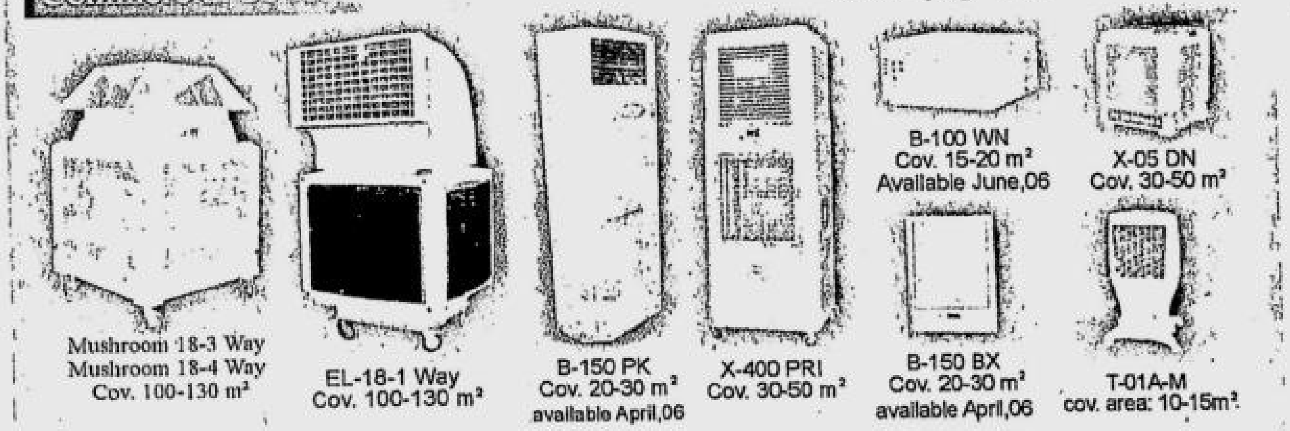

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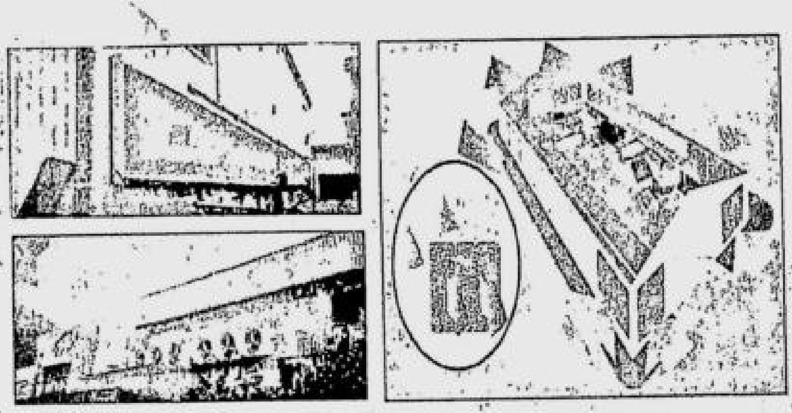

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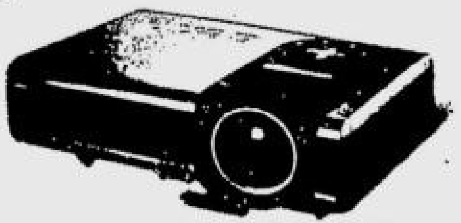

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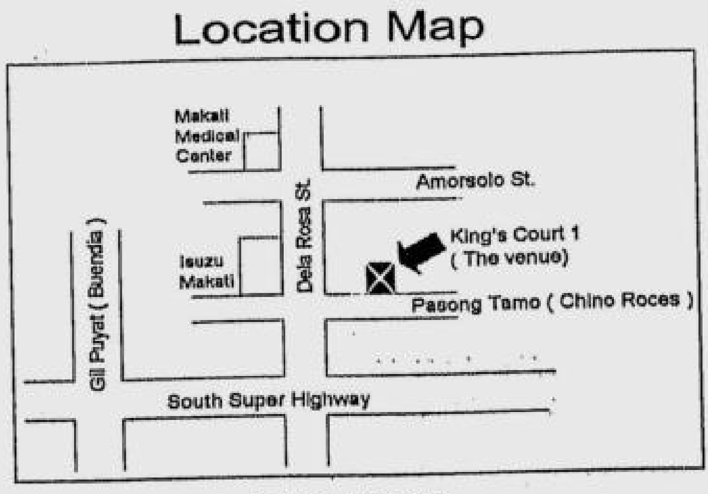

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Being in the service of country is a very personal mission, one that requires a deep commitment from the heart. As always, the human element will be the critical factor in the service of our fellowmen.

It is my hope that your years in the PNPA have prepared you to meet challenges ahead; the call to duty, to service and to sacrifice. As you begin serving the police force, strive to excellently do your job with sound decision-making, human relations skills, perseverance, compassion and courage.

As we rebuild our nation, I call on you, members of PNPA *Bagsay-Lahi* Class of 2006, to remain committed to the highest levels of professionalism and integrity that are expected of our men in uniform. Remain steadfast and firm in advancing the government's agenda for peace and progress.

Mabuhay Kayong Lahat!

Gloria Arroyo
GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO
President

Department of the Interior and Local Government
Diliman, Quezon City

On behalf of the Department of the Interior and Local Government, I extend my warmest congratulations to the *PNPA Bagsay-Lahi Class 2006* on your graduation and as we welcome you in the uniformed services.

The call of duty beckons for you. It is not just a call to action, it is a call to values. As you join us in the service, always be reminded that each of us is a steward of justice. Each of us has the responsibility to protect the public trust.

I am confident that the preparation, training and knowledge that the Academy has imparted on you will make you responsible and dedicated members of the Philippine National Police (PNP), Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), and Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP).

Amidst the challenges the public safety sector is facing right now, I am hopeful that as new breed of officers you will make a difference and eventually help in transforming the corps into the country's best.

Mabuhay kayong lahat!

RONALDO V. PUNO
Secretary

Philippine Public Safety College
Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City

I convey my warmest congratulations to the graduates of PNPA *Bagsay-Lahi* Class 2006.

As you leave the Philippine National Police Academy, the institution where you acquired your knowledge, expertise, moral guidance and discipline, bear in mind that you belong to the privileged few who were given the honor to become the nation's "the best and the brightest" - public safety officers. Corollary to this honor and privilege is the great responsibility which the Filipino expect from each of you.

It is my fervent hope that all of the members of PNPA *Bagsay-Lahi* Class 2006 will cherish the culture and tradition which the PNPA dearly holds.

May God bless you all and lead you to become active leaders to bring social change for the common good, competently and fairly.

Dr. MARGARITA R COJUANGCO, MNSA
President

PHILIPPINE NATIONAL POLICE ACADEMY
Camp General Mariano N Castañeda
Silang, Cavite

Members of PNPA *Bagsay-Lahi* Class 2006, you begin a new career and a new life as public safety officers.

As graduates, you have proven yourselves physically, emotionally, and psychologically prepared for one of the most demanding profession and self sacrificing occupation in our society.

More importantly, as public safety officers, our countrymen expect from you tremendous level of trust and responsibility. We, in the academy, can only say that as you go, take along with you the PNPA core values of HONOR, DISCIPLINE and EXCELLENCE for they are the keys to success.

Congratulations from the PNPA officers, staff, faculty and personnel. May the Lord Almighty always bless you as you have embraced Him as your Good Shepherd.

BALLIGI AGNANAYON B TIRA
Police Senior Superintendent (DSC)
Director

The Director, Staff, Personnel & Cadet Corps extend their warmest congratulations to PNPA Bagsay-Lahi Class of 2006...

Theme: Excellence in Public Safety Education & Training: The Nation's Tool for a Strong & Globally Competitive Republic"

PNPA VISION

For the greater glory of God and the pursuit of a culture of honor, discipline, and excellence, we are committed to elevate the Academy into one of the best center for learning and character develolpment.

PNPA MISSION

To provide comprehensive educaiton and training programs for the cadets to transform them into God-centered, people oriented, and job-focused public safety service officers trusted and respected by the community.

PGMA at 27th PNPA Graduation Rites

Her Excellency President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo is Guest of Honor and Speaker at the 27th Graduation Rites of the Philippine National Police Academy (PNPA) for *Bagsay Lahi* Class 2006 on March 29, 2006 at Camp General Mariano N Castañeda, Silang, Cavite.

Dr Margarita Cojuangco, President of the Philippine Public Safety College (PPSC), confers the degree of Bachelor of Science in Public Safety (BSPS) to the 177 graduating cadets and leads the officials and guests assisted by PNPA Director PSSUPT Balligi Agnanayon B Tira, PNPA Director.

PNPA Bagsay Lahi Class 2006

Leading the 177 graduates of PNPA Bagsay Lahi Class 2006 is Cdt Benjamin Dinamling Balais, a BS Biology graduate and former teacher from Lamut Beckel, La Trinidad, Benguet. Cdt Balais receives three (3) awards: the Presidential Kampilan; the Chief, Philippine National Police (PNP) Kampilan for obtaining the highest over-all rating and proficiency among the 163 graduates joining the police service; and the Leadership Kampilan as Class President.

Second placer is Cdt Lemuel Josef Jancon Clarete, an AB Philosophy graduate and also a former teacher from Nuro, Upi, Maguindanao, who is awarded the Vice Presidential Kampilan.

Third honor graduate is Cdt Stephen George Badang Antonio, a 4th year BS Electronics and Communications Engineering of Egan, Poblacion, Tadian, Mt Province, who accepts the Secretary of the Interior and Local Government (SILG) Kampilan.

Cdt Neva Renchie Ituralde De Chavez (6th Place) gets the Chief, Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP) Kampilan for getting the highest over-all rating and proficiency among the graduates joining the jail service; Cdt Arlene Niedao Abuan (7th Place)- the Chief, Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) Kampilan for having the highest over-all rating and proficiency among the graduates joining the fire bureau; Cdt Dinulong Bayuga Tombali -- the President, PPSC Kampilan as First Captain; Cdt Morgan Balbin Aguilar – the Journalism Kampilan as Editor-in-Chief of Kalasag, official publication of the PNPA Corps of Cadets; and Cdt Zyrus Michael Cherwaken Serrano- the Athletic Kampilan. The rest in the Top 10 List are: 4th Cadet Jonathan Robert Cole Rongavilla, 5th-Cdt Mark Gifter Tarona Sucalit, 8th-Cdt Anabel Globo Davocol, 9th-Cdt Jeffrey Corsiga Latayada, and 10th- Cdt Grace Madrones Jamila.

Originally, PNPA Class 2006 class has 347 members (315 males and 32 females) when accepted into the cadetship program last May 1, 2002. Only168 (150 males and 18 females) or 51% completed the program, joined by nine (9) cadets from Class 2005. It has in its ranks 12 licensed criminologists and 8 teachers, 83 college graduates, 88 college undergraduates and 6 high school graduates. Significantly, Bagsay Lahi Class 2006 is the first class in the academy history having 14 secondary school graduates upon admission. Six (6) eventually completed the four-year cadetship program.

Twenty (20) females, four (4) of whom made it to the Top 10, join the graduating class. No. 1 female graduate is Cdt Neva Renchie Ituralde de Chavez, an AB English graduate of Calapan City, secondary school teacher and who had completed her academic requirements for Master of Arts in Education major in Supervision and Administration, when she entered the academy.

The service distribution of the 177 graduates in the three (3) DILG uniformed bureaus are: PNP -163; BFP -9; BJMP -5

PNPA Bagsay Lahi Class 2006 got their class identity from the word *bagsay,* an old native term for spear or commonly called in the Cordillera highlands as *"bubeg."* Bagsay-Lahi literally means spearhead.

MOTTO: "TO LEARN TODAY, TO SERVE TOMORROW"

AWARDEES
PNPA Bagsay-Lahi Class 2006

(From L-R) No.1 Benjamin D Balais - Presidential Kampilan, No. 2 Lemuel Josef J Clarete - Vice-Presidential Kampilan, No. 3 Stephen George B Antonio - SILG Kampilan, No. 4 Jonathan Robert C Rongavilla, No. 5 Mark Gifter T Sucalit, No. 6 Neva Renchie I De Chavez - Chief BJMP Kampilan, No. 7 Arlene N Abuan -Chief, BFP Kampilan, No. 8 Anabel G Davocol, No. 9 Jeffrey C Latayada, No. 10 Grace M Jamila, Dinulong B Tombali - PPSC President Kampilan, Morgan B Aguilar - Journalism Award, Zyrus Michael C Serrano - Athletic Kampilan.

PNPA Cadetship Program

The Bachelor of Science in Public Safety (BSPS) cadetship program is a four-year full and residential scholarship offered by the government to deserving youths, single, male and female, aged 18 to 22 years, and have earned at least 72 units in any four-year college course. Cadets receive monthly training pay and clothing and subsistence allowances and are provided learning support facilities/equipment and lving quarters. Graduates of the program are automatically commissioned as inspectors in the police, fire and jail services. Inculcating the core values of honor, discipline and excellence, the BSPS curriculum reflects strong legal and moral bases that promote visible people-oriented services and total community responsibility as modules in law, humanities, social sciences, moral and spiritual enrichment are covered to enable the cadets imbibe patriotism and national pride coupled with resolute sense for the common good, integrity and public accountability, and instill good values and habits of discipline, hard work, self-dignity and self-reliance.

PNPA as a Tourist Destination

The academy is promoted as a tourist destination in CALABARZON area. During week days and weekends, schools from north Luzon and the Visayas include PNPA as a "must see" place for their students during educational tours. Crowd drawers are the Saturday Rank Inspection and Parade and the Silent or Slow Drill exhibition. Guests and visitors are accorded the appropriate briefing about the academy and viewing of facilities and amenities.

Milestone

August 26, 1977 – Established the Philippine National Police Academy in the Integrated National Police (INP) as a police and fire service training institution for the training and education of members of INP with the enactment of Presidential Decree No. 1184 (The Integrated National Police Personnel Professionalization Law of 1977).
June 12, 1978 - Activation and organization of PNPA pursuant to PC/INP General Order No. 23-P with Colonel Rene R Cruz, PC as Superintendent.
June 30, 1978 - Induction into the Cadet Corps, INP of the first batch of fifty (50) police cadets, in formal ceremony at the INP Training Command Headquarters, Fort Bonifacio, Makati, with Defense Deputy Minister Carmelo Z Barbero as guest of honor and speaker.
August 19, 1978 – Transfer of PNPA from the INPTC Headquarters, Fort Bonifacio, Makati to Camp Vicente Lim, Calamba, Laguna.
December 1, 1979 – Designation of Colonel Guillermo P Enriquez Jr, INP as Superintendent vice Colonel Cruz.
August 7, 1980 – Conferred the Bachelor of Science in Public Safety (BSPS) to 45 police officers of the Special Public Safety Course "Maharlika" Class 1980 (conducted on July 17, 1978 to July 31, 1980) with P/Lt Pacifico L Escultura graduating No. 1 (PNPA GO 80-15 dated 6 August 1980).
January 15, 1981 – Granted Academic Charter with the promulgation of PD No. 1780 (PNPA Academic Charter of 1981) elevating PNPA as the premier educational institution of the country's police force. The Academy modified its entry requirements to include civilian applicants or those outside of INP provided they possess all other qualifications for admission.
December 13, 1990 – PNPA administrative supervision and control was transferred from the Philippine National Police (PNP) to the Philippine Public Safety College (PPSC) which was created to assume the overall responsibility for the training, human resource development and continuing education of all uniformed personnel of the police, fire and jail services.
April 12, 1993 – Admitted three (3) female cadets into the cadetship program pursuant to RA 7192 (Women and Development Act).
April 16, 1994 – Transfer of site from Camp Vicente Lim, Calamba, Laguna to Camp General Mariano N Castañeda, Silang, Cavite.
April 8, 1995 – Had Cdt Portia Bañaga as its first woman graduate.
June 12, 2003 – PNPA 25th Founding Anniversary.

TEN-POINT AGENDA TO "BEAT THE ODDS" IN SIX YEARS UNDER THE ARROYO ADMINISTRATION

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E - Education for all
A - Automated elections
T - Transport and digital infrasctructure to connect the country

T - Terminate the MILF and NPA conflicts
H - Heal the wounds of EDSA
E - Electricity and water for all barangays

O - Opportunities for 10 million jobs
D - Decongest Metro Manila
DS - Develop Clark and Subic

Peza holds benefits for John Hay ecozone

BAGUIO CITY—THE PHILIPPINE ECONOMIC Zone Authority is ready to grant the same tax benefits it has extended to the Clark Special Economic Zone to the Camp John Hay Economic Zone, a Peza official said.

Peza spokesperson Elmer San Pascual said Peza was only waiting for an endorsement from the Department of Tourism for Camp John Hay to be converted into a Peza-administered zone.

The conversion would effectively restore the tax perks that John Hay and other economic zones administered by the Bases Conversion Development Authority lost due to a 2003 Supreme Court ruling.

The ruling voided the tax benefits extended to BCDA-run zones on grounds that only Congress had the power to grant these benefits.

Except for Subic Bay Freeport, which is granted benefits by Republic Act 7227 (the BCDA law), many BCDA zones received their benefits from proclamations issued by former President Fidel Ramos.

Converting affected BCDA zones into Peza-administered zones was introduced by the developer, Camp John Hay Development Corp. (CJHDevco), according to documents obtained by the INQUIRER.

San Pascual said Peza and BCDA have agreed in principle that BCDA zones absorbed by Peza will be classified as commercial economic zones and are only subject to Peza fee regulations, and not its administrative control.

He said BCDA retains its stake over these firms, while Malacañang awaits pending bills in Congress that correct the loophole in Republic Act 7227 by restoring the tax benefits of all operating BCDA zones. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

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Report on the Financial Condition of the Trust Fund
As of December 31, 2005

Sale of bonds					P	150,000,000.00
Add: Collections:						
Interest Earned						
	2004	3,539,784.41				
	2005	1,770,092.47	P	5,309,876.88		
Total Funding (Sinking Fund)				17,372,761.25		
Total Funding (Revenue Construction Fund)				2,940,780.88		
Refund of Net Overpayment to New City Builders				162,290.40		
Others				0.83		25,785,710.24
Total						175,785,710.24
Less: Disbursements:						
Trust Fund	Annex - A			10,925,474.63		
Project Construction Fund	Annex - B			130,387,290.40		
Sinking Fund	Annex - C			26,539,871.25		
Project Revenue Fund	Annex - D					167,852,636.28
Funds Available as of Even Date					P	7,933,073.96

Certified Correct:

(Sgd.) **FVP MANUEL S. BANAYAD**
Head, DBP-Trust Services

Noted:

(Sgd.) **HON. DAHLIA A. LOYOLA**
Mayor, Municipality of Carmona

(PDI--March 27, 2006)

Construction of ₱2-B Daraga airport set

DARAGA, ALBAY—THE CONSTRUCTION of the first international airport in Southern Luzon has been set for the last quarter of the year following the approval of the 2006 General Appropriations Act.

The 2006 GAA or national budget includes the P2-billion allotment for the airport in Daraga.

Site development could be started before the year ends, according to Daraga Mayor Gerry Jaucian.

Called the Southern Luzon International Airport, the project will cover some 24 hectares in barangays Alobo, Kinawitan, Mabini, Burgos and Inarado in this town.

Areas for the runway, airport terminal and control tower are currently being identified in these villages.

The Special Technical Working Group headed by Air Transportation Office chief Frisco Sto. Domingo is handling the technical aspects of the proposed project, Jaucian said.

He disclosed that aside from the P150-million initial funding from Albay 3rd district Rep. Joey Salceda, House appropriations committee chair, Camarines Sur Gov. Luis Raymund Villafuerte, concurrent Regional Development Council (RDC) chair, has pledged P100 million as equity for the project.

The mayor expressed optimism that the international airport, which was expected to spur economic development in this part of the country, would be realized because of the support from the local chief executives in Bicol.

Earlier, members of the RDC—composed mostly of mayors and governors from all over the region—promised to extend whatever resources they could share to the project.

Legazpi City Mayor Noel Rosal, for his part, said the city government accepted Daraga as the site of the international airport.

Rosal said the port would not only benefit the host town and Albay, but also the entire region and Southern Luzon area in terms of business and tourism, once it is fully operational.

The project is expected to be completed by 2009. *Edgar Alejo, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Profit-taking seen

From page B1

The composite index touched a seven-year high at 2,208.13 last week, up 58 points or 2.7 percent.

"For the near term, going beyond the 2,250 level may be pushing the market a bit too far too early. If it reaches the target level of 2,250 next week, a normal short-term profit taking cycle might follow with support seen at the 2,160," AB Capital Securities said in a note to clients.

AB Capital added that interest rate worries might affect investor sentiment as the US Federal Reserve meets on Wednesday.

"Renewed worries over the outlook for interest rates came after US government bond yields recently rose to multi-year highs," AB Capital said.

Paul Joseph Garcia, chief investment officer at ING Investment Management, said last week that investors shifted to stocks due to lower interest rates fetched by fixed-income securities. But if interest rates would head north again, this could affect appetite for stocks. *Elizabeth L. Sanchez*

Another $6M . . .

From page B1

Mendoza said the planned test run of the new air terminal would proceed as scheduled at the end of the month, with Cebu Pacific Air having committed to fly out of Terminal 3 for its Hong Kong destinations.

The transportation chief said that Lucio Tan-owned Air Philippines and Singapore-based low-cost carrier Jet Star Asia Airways have also expressed interest in flying out of Terminal 3 during the test run period.

Mendoza said the test run would last for at least a month as authorities try to iron out the kinks in the new airport, but he added that no firm timetable existed as to exactly when Terminal 3 would start full commercial operations.

The transportation chief conceded, however, that ongoing litigation could still derail the planned soft launch of the airport.

In particular, the government is still asking the courts for permission to start operating the terminal even while discussions over the right amount of compensation for its German builders are ongoing.

In a separate interview, Miaa general manager Alfonso Cusi said the test run would depend on whether the courts grant the government permission to do so.

"We're waiting for the legal right to exercise ownership," he said.

So far, the government has set aside P3 billion in an escrow account with Land Bank of the Philippines as initial payment to Terminal 3's builders.

"We're asking the Supreme Court: If we release the money, can we operate the airport [already]?" Cusi said.

Authorities have already completed the access road that will link the new terminal with the older terminal 2, which is used exclusively by Philippine Airlines, and terminal, 1 which is used by all other international airlines.

Mendoza said, however, that the government has junked a plan to construct a tunnel under the runway to link the three terminals because of security concerns in the wake of the 9-11 terrorist attacks on the US.

"A tunnel is no longer viable," he said. "So we've discarded it."

Bright prospects . . .

From page B8

Matthias Niggel, a consultant with the German Development Service, said there were many "hidden treasures" in the Philippines like organic coffee and carrageenan from seaweeds that had a ready market in Germany and Europe in general.

"There is a lot of potential here and I believe this can be addressed step by step," Niggel said.

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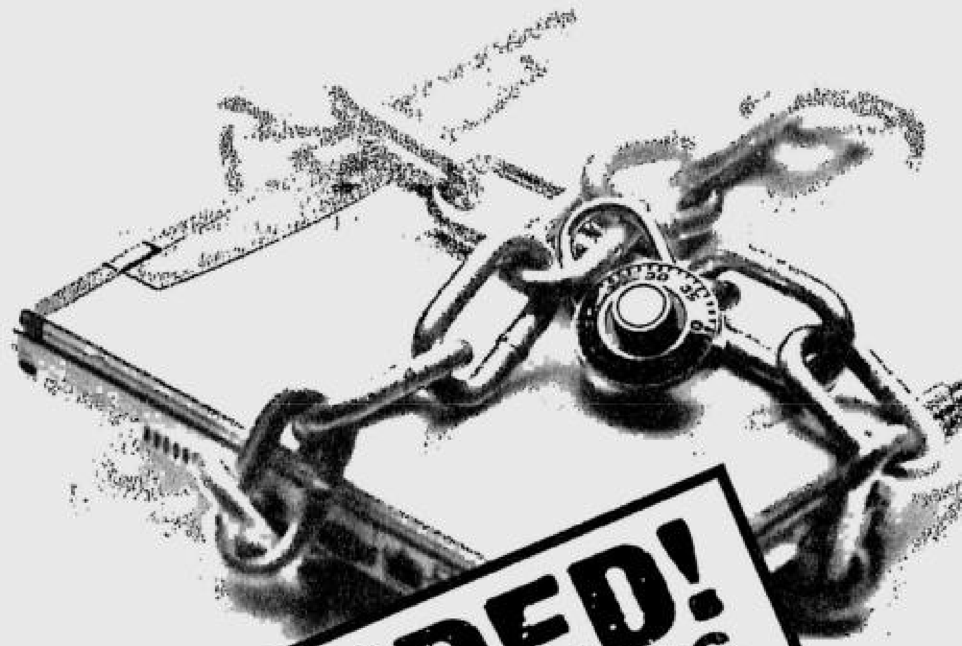

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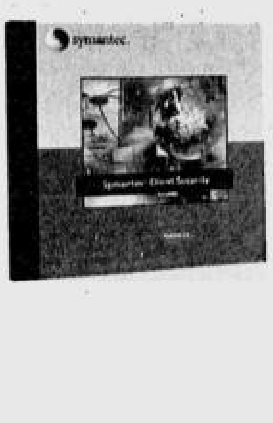

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Lucrative prices await RP mangoes in Australia

NAGA CITY—HIGH PRICES await Philippine mangoes, which have gained a strong following in Australia, according to an embassy official.

Ma. Araceli Escandor-Albarece, agriculture attaché to Australia, said Australians currently pay as much as A$2 to A$4 for each mango, and demand continues to rise.

Albarece said supply could hardly cope with the demand, partly because not all mangoes meet Australian standards.

She, however, said that the Australian government was helping the Philippines meet, these stringent quality standards for mangoes, and that a survey was now being conducted in Davao del Sur.

Albarece, who called the INQUIRER from Perth, Australia, said that a $250,000-survey, funded by the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAid), of the mango plantations in Davao del Sur would determine whether mangoes there were free from pulp weevel disease that infects mango fruits.

She said that once completed and found to be free from pulp weevel disease, all the mangoes from Davao del Sur would be allowed to enter Australia.

Albarece said the mangoes from Guimaras were currently the only ones from the Philippines certified for Australian export.

The agriculture attaché said there was a vast market for Philippine mango in Australia because Australians were already used to the unique taste and succulence of Philippine mangoes.

She added that Australian buyers were willing to pay high price for fresh mangos from the Philippines.

She said the rapid growth in the demand for fresh mangos from Australian consumers had prompted one Australian company to address the shortage by establishing a mango plantation in Queensland and the northern territory of Australia.

The agriculture attaché said the Harvest Co. of Australia is establishing plantations covering 1,000 hectares and targets to plant 350,000 mangoes in two years.

Albarece said the company was propagating the Calypso variety, which it believes can thrive in Australian conditions.

She said that mango producers in Davao del Sur must prepare for the big Australian export and band together to be competitive and up to Australian standards.

"It's time for our mango producers to group themselves and adopt a more aggressive marketing scheme to take advantage of the erratic production and supply of mangoes in Australia," she said. *Juan Escandor Jr., Southern Luzon Bureau*

MANGO plantation in Guimaras

"Asian Brand Strategy: A New Boardroom Paradigm"
by Martin Roll
Author of "Asian Brand Strategy"

"Building a Culture of Innovation"
by Tony Fernandes
President
AirAsia

"The Brand as the Central Operating Principle"
by Joerg Breuer
President
BMW Philippines

"The Art of Innovation"
by Rene Almendras
President
Cebu Holdings, Inc.
VP for Corp. Initiatives
Ayala Land

"Driving Innovations Investment with Fiscal Soundness"
by Lorenzo Tan
President and CEO
Sun Life of Canada

"The Road Ahead for the Philippine Pharmaceutical Industry"
by Edwin Feist
President
Abbott Philippines
Regional Director
Philippines/Australia/NZ

"The Power of Ideas"
by Praveen Kenneth
Managing Director
Law and Kenneth Worldwide

"Customer Intimacy through Fashion and Mobility"
by Sandeep Khanna
Head of Marketing
Nokia Philippines

New Research Techniques in an Innovative Environment
by Issa Baron
Managing Partner
Good Thinking

Creativity Across Borders
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Ariel Manuel
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Lor Calma Design

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Camarines Sur to invest in bio-diesel plan

PILI, Camarines Sur—IN ANTICIPATION OF further growth in the demand for alternative fuel, the provincial government of Camarines Sur said it planned to establish a 10,000-hectare plantation of Jatropha curcas, or tuba-tuba in local dialect, a plant used in India as a source of bio-diesel.

The program gets underway with the planting of 100 hectares to Jatropha in the towns of Caramoan and Presentacion, to be expanded later to include idle public lands in other towns of Camarines Sur.

Gov. Luis Raymund Villafuerte said the provincial government decided to venture into the commercial production of Jatropha as it expects crude oil prices to rise further.

At the same time, the project supports the local government unit's plan to generate its own resources.

Entrepreneurial ventures

Villafuerte said that like other ongoing entrepreneurial ventures of the provincial government in tourism and information technology industries, the benefits of Jatropha commercial production would be used for improving social services.

The governor said several companies had already expressed their plan to buy the Jatropha raw materials that are processed into bio-diesel fuel for diesel-fed vehicles.

In a study of the Provincial Agriculture Office (PAO) here, a one-hectare plantation of Jatropha can yield from 6 to 8 metric tons of seeds.

The Jatropha seeds contain an estimated 37 percent of the oil used in producing bio-diesel fuel.

It is calculated that a one-hectare plantation could produce the equivalent of 2,300 to 2,800 liters of fuel.

The Jatropha plant matures in eight months from planting and the fruits bearing the seeds are ready for harvest just three months from flowering.

Known in Tagalog as tubing bakod, tawa-tawa in Ilocos and tagumbao in Pangasinan, the Jatropha plant has been used by Filipinos for folk medicine and a cure for snakebites.

It has also been found to be drought-resistant and can grow in dry lands with any type of soil. The plant is also easy to maintain and can produce fruit for as long as 50 years.

Rudolf Diesel

Villafuerte said that based on the research of PAO, the bio-diesel concept dates back to 1885 when Rudolf Diesel built the first diesel engine with the intention of running it on fuel sources from vegetables.

In the 1900 Paris Show, Diesel surprised everyone when he ran the patented engine on any hydrocarbon fuel available, including gasoline and peanut oil.

Some 12 years after the Paris Show, the inventor said this statement that became the rallying cry of bio-diesel believers: "The use of vegetable oils for engine fuels may seem insignificant today. But such oils may in the course of time become as important as petroleum and the coal tar products at present time."

Decades since Diesel made his statement, scientists discovered in 1970 that the viscosity (thickness) of vegetable oils could be reduced by a simple chemical process and could work well as diesel fuel in modern engines.

Global trend

Villafuerte said the investment in the Jatropha plantation was inspired in part by policies under the Kyoto Protocol that aims to check the carbon emission worldwide.

He cited the proposal of the European Community in 1991 of a 91-percent tax reduction for the use of biofuels, including bio-diesel.

Villafuerte said bio-diesel was the most valuable form of renewable energy that can be used directly in any existing, unmodified diesel engine.

Villafuerte added that bio-diesel produces 80 percent less carbon dioxide, 100 percent less sulfur dioxide emissions and provides 90 percent reduction in cancer risks. *Juan Escandor Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

BSP eases regulations for forex dealers

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL NG Pilipinas has eased the requirements for Filipino travelers and other retail users of dollars to be able to deal with non-bank foreign exchange dealers or money changers.

BSP Deputy Governor Nestor Espenilla Jr. said that members of the Monetary Board agreed during a meeting last week, to waive some of the stringent documentation requirements set for money changers.

Last year, all foreign exchange dealers or money changers were required to register with the BSP in line with the objectives of the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force against money laundering.

(What the monetary board agreed on was) a simplication of the regulations," Espenilla said. "For example, when you are traveling, and you have to buy foreign exchange in excess of $5,000, you need only to show your plane ticket and passport."

In the past, he said there were so many requirements needed for a retail user to be able to transact with money changers. In case of foreign exchange transactions exceeding $5,000 or its equivalent, previous regulations required a notarized application together with supporting documents to justify the dollar demand.

But for people buying less than $5,000, requirements have not been stringent from the start, Espenilla said.

The liberalization of retail dollar sales by these money changers is expected to benefit Filipinos going abroad for employment.

Forex dealers in the country are mandated to strictly document all sales or purchases of foreign currencies, similar to the know-your-customer (KYC) policy adopted by banks.

Under the rules, foreign exchange dealers must see to it that the $5,000 limit on the sale of foreign exchange is not breached by the splitting of a foreign exchange purchase into smaller amounts so as to make it appear that the purchase does not violate the prescribed limit.

There is deemed to be "splitting" of foreign exchange if the money changer sells foreign currencies to a single purchaser within a 15-day period, such that the transactions, when combined, would amount to more than $5,000.

When the peso was depreciating in the past, the BSP was concerned that even money changers were contributing to pressures on the foreign exchange by hoarding dollars and parking them in the banking system's foreign currency deposit units.

₱1.7-B power plant in Mindoro planned

By Abigail L. Ho

PHILIPPINE HYBRID Energy Systems Inc. (Phesi), the local subsidiary of Breeze-electric LLC, wants to put up a P1.7-billion diesel-wind hybrid power facility in Oriental Mindoro.

Oriental Mindoro Rep. Rodolfo Valencia said the planned 18-megawatt (MW) facility would give the province a much needed boost in its goal of becoming a major tourism hub in the country.

According to Breezeelectric's official website, the company's planned diesel-wind hybrid in Oriental Mindoro would generate 14.5 MW from windmills and 3.6 MW from a diesel facility.

Apart from the diesel-wind facility, Oriental Mindoro is also negotiating with the Spanish government for possible aids in exploring the province's hydropower potential, Valencia said.

"There are four hydropower projects that we're looking at, that Mindoro can do," he said. "We'd also like to look at our coal potential. We believe Mindoro can be an exporter of power, eventually."

Geothermal power, he said, could be another area of development as studies had shown that the province has the potential to yield 20 MW of power from geothermal sources.

On the transmission side, University of Asia and the Pacific College of Economics dean Peter Lee U said Kepco Philippines Corp. had committed to build a submarine cable that would connect Oriental Mindoro to the Luzon grid.

The country's second largest independent power producer will be advancing $50 million to bankroll the implementation of the National Transmission Corp.'s Luzon-Mindoro submarine cable project.

What . . .

From page B8

Besides, Ramos did not cite the good signs: The stock market has surged to the highest point in seven years, the peso gets stronger by the day, interest rates have dropped and still dropping (Ramos should know this, being a bank chair), tax collection is growing, public debt is down, direct foreign investment (particularly in mining) is rising, overseas Filipino workers are sending home more dollars then ever before.

Ramos says the improving landscape is artificial and temporary. He is not engaged in economic sabotage as some congressman has charged. Ramos is simply turning green with envy.

ILOILO II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
(ILECO II)
Pototan, Iloilo

INVITATION TO BID

ILECO II is inviting interested suppliers and contractors to bid for the following materials and services for maintenance and rehabilitation of distribution lines to attain a single digit system loss and compliance to the Philippine Grid Code.

Particulars	Schedule of Bidding
1. Supply and installation of 69 kv circuit breaker, control, PT and CT	April 19, 2006 (Wednesday) 1:30 PM
2. Reconditioning of 5 MVA Power Transformer	April 19, 2006 (Wednesday) 1:30 PM
3. Supply of Transformer Oil	April 19, 2006 (Wednesday) 1:30 PM
4. Supply of various distribution lines materials, hardware, conductors, fuses, single phase electronic meters and distribution transformers	April 26, 2006 (Wednesday) 1:30 PM

Interested bidders can pick up the Bid Document at the PBAC Secretariat c/o Mrs. April Joy Plana after submitting copy of their Business Profile. Existing suppliers can submit also their updated profile.

ILECO II reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject Bids at any time prior to award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder(s).

For more information, please contact the PBAC Secretariat at Telefax No. (033) 529-8064 or call PBAC Chairman Mr. Fernando Lasafin at (033) 529-8063 or Cell No. 0920-9180339 and Engr. Redmond Roquios Cell No. 0918-9023703.

(Sgd.) FERNANDO LASAFIN
PBAC Chairman

(PDI - March 27, 2006)

MAYNILAD WATER SERVICES, INC.
Basement MWSI Bldg., MWSS Complex
Katipunan Road, Balara, Quezon City, Philippines 1100
Tel. Nos. 435-33-66, 920-5521 loc. 3600, 3615, 3616

INVITATION TO BID

Maynilad Water Services, Inc. is inviting all interested suppliers to pre-qualify and participate in the scheduled e-Bid for the supply and delivery of the following item:

Quantity.	Description
10 Sets	**Portable Insertion Type Flow Meters with Data Logger** (including five (5) pieces Communication Cables)
As per MWSI Technical Specifications & Bid Terms & Condition	

Interested bidders may, beginning March 27, 2006 to March 31, 2006 **and upon payment of the non-refundable participating fee of Two Thousand Five Hundred Pesos Only (P2,500.00)**, obtain further information and secure a complete set of pre-qualification forms and bid terms and condition (bid documents) from Purchasing Department, Basement, MWSI Building, MWSS Compound, Katipunan Road, Balara, Quezon City. Telephone Nos. 435-3366/435-3374; Fax No. 928-2303. Payment may be in the form of Cash or Manager's Check addressed to Maynilad Water Services, Inc.

MWSI reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids without offering any reason, waive and all informalities therein and accept the bid it deems most advantageous to the company.

(Sgd.) LUIS M.Z. LERMA
Manager, Purchasing Dept.

(PDI – March 26 & 27, 2006)

MAYNILAD WATER SERVICES, INC.
Basement MWSI Bldg., MWSS Complex
Katipunan Road, Balara, Quezon City, Philippines 1100
Tel. Nos. 435-33-66, 920-5521 loc. 3600, 3615, 3616

INVITATION TO BID

Maynilad Water Services, Inc. is inviting all interested suppliers to pre-qualify and participate in the scheduled e-Bid for the supply and delivery of the following item:

Quantity.	Description
1,205 Drums	CALCIUM HYPOCHLORITE, Ca (Ocl)2 AWWA B-300-92)
As per MWSI Technical Specifications & Bid Terms & Condition	

Interested bidders may, beginning March 27, 2006 until March 31, 2006 **and upon payment of the non-refundable participating fee of Two Thousand Pesos Only (P2,000.00)**, obtain further information and secure a complete set of pre-qualification forms and bid terms and condition (bid documents) from Purchasing Department, Basement, MWSI Building, MWSS Compound, Katipunan Road, Balara, Quezon City. Telephone Nos. 435-3366/435-3374; Fax No. 928-2303. Payment may be in the form of Cash or Manager's Check addressed to Maynilad Water Services, Inc.

MWSI reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids without offering any reason, waive and all informalities therein and accept the bid it deems most advantageous to the company.

(Sgd.) LUIS M.Z. LERMA
Manager, Purchasing Dept.

(PDI – March 26 & 27, 2006)

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- Weight: 2 kg.
- 1 Year International Limited Warranty

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Empowered by Innovation NEC

We're just doing our job, ERC says after fining Transco

By Abigail L. Ho

EVEN AFTER SLAPPING a P9.4-million fine on the National Transmission Corp. (Transco) for its failure to seek approvals for 37 projects, the Energy Regulatory Commission said it did not mean to cause delays in the implementation of crucial transmission projects.

ERC chair Rodolfo Albano Jr. said in a statement that the imposition of the fine was not tantamount to an order compelling Transco to stop ongoing projects.

"These projects have implications on the rates of end-consumers," Albano said. "The ERC is merely doing its job of ensuring that the projects will not be prejudicial to stakeholders of the electric power industry. The ERC is certain that this is also a concern shared by Transco."

The P9.4-million penalty, he explained, was for Transco's non-compliance to a provision in RA 9136, or the Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001 (Epira). According to the provision, Transco has to seek ERC approval before implementing a project.

Albano said the objective of that particular Epira provision was to ensure that consumers would not be burdened with "contract items found to be in excess or too early for the needs of the present and the immediate future."

"The items disallowed by the ERC will not form part of the rates to be charged to Transco customers," he explained.

Albano said the ERC was not the "cause of delay" in the projects that Transco wanted to implement as the regulatory body was simply doing its job.

The state firm, Albano said, should have paid more attention to the prerequisites for undertaking capital projects, which included prior approval from the ERC.

"Again, the ERC has not issued any order to prevent Transco from proceeding with its capital projects," he said. "It only asks Transco to comply with the requirements set by law and to pay the penalties borne out of its violation."

The ERC recently handed down a decision slapping Transco with P9.4 million worth of fines for implementing 39 projects, including the Cebu-Negros and Negros-Panay interconnection projects, without ERC approval.

Of the 39 projects, six were exempted from the penalty as Transco was able to justify that those were undertaken by independent power producers and not by Transco itself.

US gets . . .

From page B5

pines from January to November 2005.

The volume of VCO exported during the 11-month period was 151 percent higher than the 177 MT sold overseas throughout 2004.

In current prices, the value of exports rose to about $1.6 billion in the 11 months of 2005 or 184.5 percent higher than the $553.5 million posted by end-2004.

According to the United Coconut Associations of the Philippines, the US has imported 418 MT of VCO from the Philippines as of November last year.

Ucap said this volume was lower than the 96 percent market share of the US in 2004, when local exporters tapped more markets in Europe and Asia.

Ireland was the biggest European market with imports reaching 6 MT, while Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom each bought 2 MT of VCO.

Last week, local traders and government officials promoted the product through the National Products Expo West (NPEW) held in Anaheim, California.

Girlie R. Sarmiento, a business development manager with the Department of Trade and Industry, said in an interview that Viviendo Philippines Inc. and Prosource International Products took part in the NPEW expo.

NPEW is the largest natural products trade show in the US. It attracted 37,000 retailers and manufacturers from 80 countries last year.

Viviendo and Prosource joined four other local firms engaged in the manufacturing of natural and organic products.

The NPEW event marked the formal "debut" of Philippine VCO in the international organic and natural market.

CHANGE OF BUSINESS STATUS

Notice is hereby given that the following has changed from single proprietorship to corporation:

Former Business Name : ARN BUILDERS, Single Proprietorship
Address : Room 203, Rivergate Commercial Complex
49 Mango Avenue, Cebu City 6000

Approved New Business Name : DENZELL ARN BUILDERS, INC.
Address : Room 203, Rivergate Commercial Complex
49 Mango Avenue, Cebu City 6000

Approved SEC Registration No. : RRN 20040924150519113

(PDI--March 27, 2006)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
SEC Building, EDSA, Greenhills
City of Mandaluyong, Metro Manila, Philippines 1554
CORPORATION FINANCE DEPARTMENT

IN THE MATTER OF

ACTIVE REALTY AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION : REGISTRATION OF SECURITIES
X-----------------------------------X

NOTICE AND ORDER

Notice is hereby given that on March 15, 2006, a registration statement was filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission for and on behalf of **ACTIVE REALTY AND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION** for the registration of 324 Timeshare Membership Certificates at a price ranging from P323,000.00 to P1,827,600.00 each.

According to the papers/documents presented, the following persons are the directors/officers of the corporation:

Name	Position
ANTONIO A. TURALBA, Sr.	Chairman
MA. CRISTINA V. TURALBA	Vice-Chairman/Director
ANTONIO V. TURALBA, Jr.	President
ANTONELLA T. ABDON	Director/Treasurer
ANJEANETTE T. FUENTEBELLA	Director
RENE J. KATIGBAK	Corporate Secretary

Said registration statement and other papers/documents attached thereto are open to inspection by interested parties during business, hours and copies thereof, photostatic or otherwise, shall be furnished to every party at such reasonable fees as the Commission may prescribe.

JUSTINA F. CALLANGAN
Director

(PDI--March 27 & April 3, 2006)

NATIONAL TRANSMISSION CORPORATION
South Luzon Operations and Maintenance
San Vicente, Biñan, Laguna, Philippines 4024
TransCo

INVITATION TO BID
FOR THE SALE OF UNSERVICEABLE ITEMS
"As Is, Where Is"

DATE OF BIDDING : APRIL 05, 2006 TIME : 1:30 PM

Item No.	Description / Location	MINIMUM BID PRICE
1.	One (1) Lot – Various Unserviceable/Scrap Materials composed of the following: Steel trusses, purlins, steel gate, angular bars, ventilators, steel I-beam, anchor rods, power cables, guy wires, tower parts – angles, plates, bolts & nuts, tubes, machining tools and equipment – lathe machine, fosdick machine, transformer, crocodile Jacks, vertical air compressor, safety vault, plant spare material, boom truck hoist bar, GPE/CME items-chairs, tables, computers, AVR, printer, plotter, calculators, aircon units, fax machine, assorted vehicle's tires, furniture, fixture, etc.	P366,000.00

REQUIREMENTS FOR ISSUANCE OF BID DOCUMENTS:

The Bid Documents shall be issued to bidders upon application and payment of a non-refundable fee of P200.00 per set.

Sealed bids in the prescribed form shall be received until 12:00 noon on April 05, 2006 at the National Transmission Corporation, SLO&M, San Vicente, Biñan, Laguna and shall there be opened and publicly read.

ALL BIDS MUST BE SUBMITTED WITH THE FOLLOWING:

1. Proposal Bond Deposit in the form of cash, manager's check equivalent to ten percent (10%) of the total bid price; and
2. Latest income tax return of the bidder or financial statement of the company (original or BIR stamped-receipt copy)

Additional information and/or request for inspection may be secured from TransCo-SLO&M, Administration Division at the above address or call Tel. No. (02) 520-6776.

Issuance of Bid Documents will start on **March 27, 2006** until **April 04, 2006** at the SLOM Warehouse office.

The Corporation reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any formality found therein and to accept such proposals as may be advantageous to its interest.

(Sgd.) **RENE D. RAMAS**
Chairman
Regional Asset Management Sub-Committee

(PDI--March 27, 2006)

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
Maynila, Pilipinas

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/car dealers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project.

Name of Project/Brief Description	Supply and delivery of the following: Item 1 : 2005 Medium Size/Class Sedan, A/T Item 2 : 2005 Van, 2.5 Diesel, MT Item 3 : 2005 SUV 4 x 2, 2.7 Liter, A/T
Approved Budget for the Contract	Item 1 : P1,600,000.00 Item 2 : 1,500,000.00 Item 3 : 1,500,000.00
Delivery Period:	Items 1 & 2 : Within thirty (30) calendar days after receipt of Purchase Order Item 3 Within fifteen (15) calendar days after receipt of Purchase Order

Prospective bidders should have undertaken a similar project within the last five (5) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	20 March 2006 to 31 March 2006
2. Pre-Bid Conference	31 March 2006, 10:30 A.M.
3. Opening of Bids	12 April 2006, 2:00 P.M.
4. Bid Evaluation	These shall be in accordance with the prescribed periods allowed in the Implementing Rules & Regulations (IRR)-A of R.A. No. 9184 dated 10 January 2003.
5. Post-qualification	
6. Notice of Award	

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of the following non-refundable amount to the Bangko Sentral Ng Pilipinas Cashier. Item 1: P800.00; Items 2 & 3: P750.00.

The BSP assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

The BSP reserves the right to reject any and all bid proposals, or declare the bidding a failure, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered into as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) JUAN DE ZUÑIGA, JR.
Chairman

(PDI - March 27, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
Municipality of Lugait
Province of Misamis Oriental

Invitation for Bids (IFB)

Date : Mar. 27, 2006
Contract ID No.: **SP-081-IN-01**
World Bank Loan No.: 4446PH

1. The Government of the Philippines has received a loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development towards the cost of Local Government Finance and Development and intends to apply part of the funds to cover eligible payments under the Contract for the ***Expansion and Rehabilitation of Municipal Health Center.*** Bidding is open to all bidders from eligible source countries as defined in the *Guidelines: Procurement under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits.*
2. The ***Municipality of Lugait, Misamis Oriental*** invites sealed bids from eligible sources for the ***Expansion and Rehabilitation of Municipal Health Center consist of Construction of 2 storey Building with approx. floor area of 570 square meters, Perimeter Fence, Elevated Concrete Water Reservoir, Septic Tank and Rehabilitation of Existing Building.***
3. Bidding documents may be purchased starting ***March 27 to May 3, 2006 during office hours at the Office of the BAC Chairman/Municipal Engineer, Municipal Hall, Lugait, Misamis Oriental, upon payment of a non-refundable fee of three thousand pesos (Php3,000.00)*** or its equivalent in a freely-convertible currency, for each set. Interested bidders may obtain further information at the same address.
4. Bids shall be valid for a period of ninety ***(90) days*** after bid opening and must be accompanied by bid security of ***one hundred eighty five thousand (Php185,000.00)*** in a form of cash, certified check, bank guarantee or its equivalent in a convertible currency and shall be delivered to the ***Office of the Municipal Mayor, 2nd Floor of Municipal Hall, Lugait, Misamis Oriental*** on or before ***10:00 in the morning of May 3, 2006*** at which time they will be opened in the presence of the bidders who wish to attend.
5. A pre-bid conference will be held on ***April 19, 2006, at 9:30 A.M.*** at the ***Office of the Municipal Mayor, 2nd Floor Municipal Hall, Lugait, Misamis Oriental.***

(Sgd.) ENGR. GLECERIO H. GABE
BAC Chairman

(PDI--March 27, 2006)

ADVT

CALENERGY DONATES P1-M TO LEYTE MUDSLIDE VICTIMS.

CalEnergy International recently donated P1-million to the mudslide victims of Barangay Guinsaugon in Southern Leyte through the Philippine National Red Cross. Photo shows CalEnergy President Joseph Sullivan presenting the P1-M check to PNRC Chairman and Senator Richard Gordon. With them are CalEnergy Vice President and Corporate Counsel Linda B. Castillo and Corporate Social Responsibility Coordinator Avic Arcilla.

CalEnergy operates three geothermal plants in Leyte producing over 500 megawatts of electricity. Beyond building and operating environment-friendly energy facilities, CalEnergy is also committed to the welfare of its communities through various community projects. Aside from the P1-million donation of the company, CalEnergy employees also initiated their own fund-raising drive and bought blankets, clothes and other necessities for the mudslide victims.

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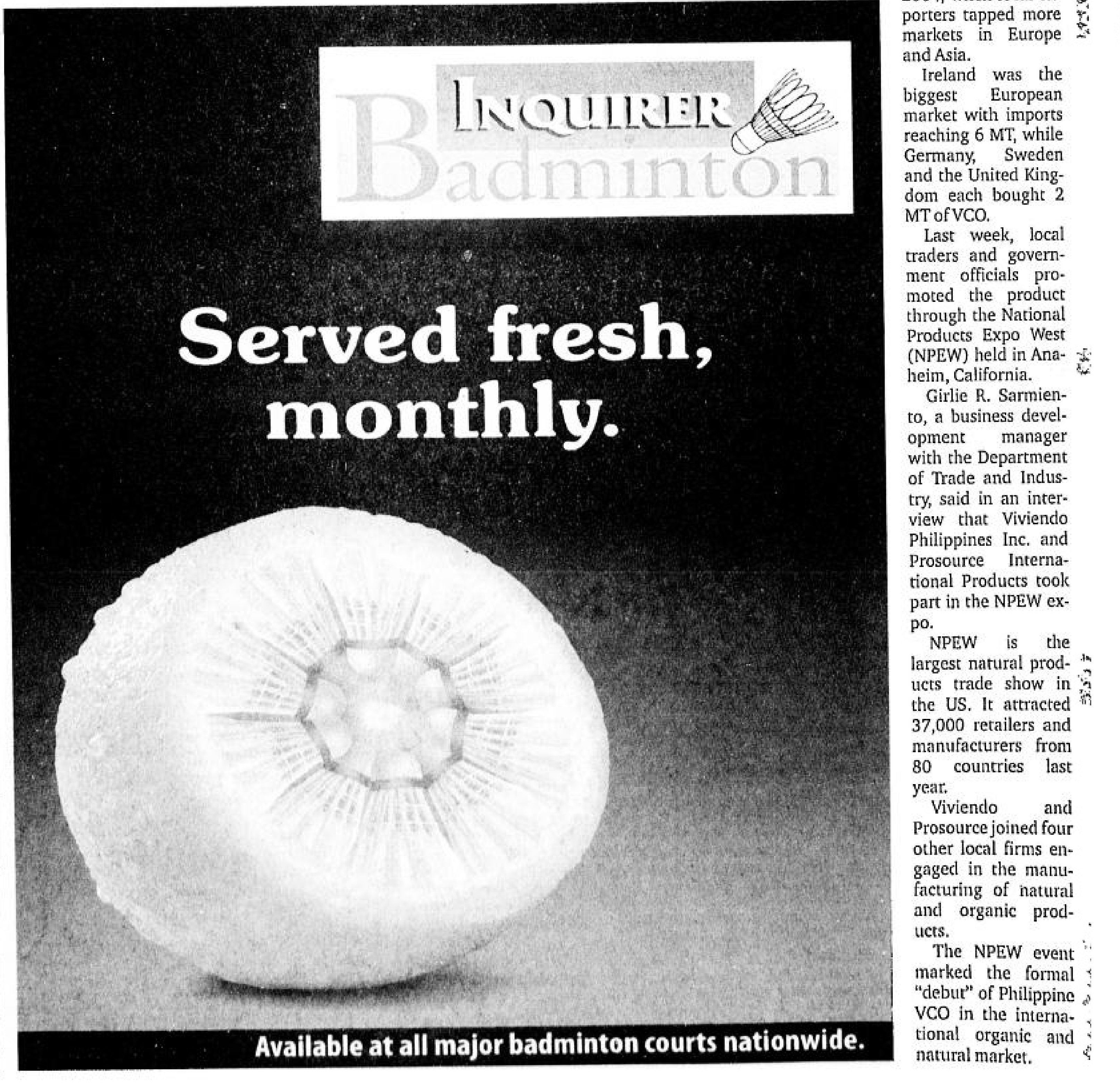

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UY GO SEE

Widow of the late ***Yu Lip***
of Bacolod City, Negros Occidental
peacefully passed away on March 23, 2006 at the age of 97.

Her bereaved children and grandchildren:

Suet Chi (†) & Kwong Duc Ng
- Tian Zhen & Shu Xian
- Tian Yan & Li Rong
- Ngar Chun & Kwok Kuen Tam
- Ngar Ling & Wai Kin Wong
- Ngar Ching
- Tin Yin & Deng Jia
- Tin Fat & Wing Yee

An Kong (†) & Hui Tin
- Helen & Kent Vaughan
- James & Clara
- Jessie & Decelyn
- John
- Jerry
- Jennifer & Antonio Melliza
- Joel & Juvy
- Julie

An Hua & Khema
- Rosemarie
- Eva Marie & Lester Dela Torre
- Wealton & Helen
- Willy & Caroline
- Van
- Christine
- Lawrence
- André
- Alain

Dou Wei & Puey Kiong Ty (†)
- Li Yan & Qing Wen Wang
- Li Rong & Tian Yan
- Li Ying
- Li Feng & Bing Huang Zhuang
- Bing Bing & Hai Long Wu
- Jian Quan & Jun Liang

Dou En & To Siap Lo
- Luo Yang
- Luo Mei

Ricardo & Elizabeth
- Emilie & Nelson Yu
- Evelyn (†)
- Caroline & Eugene Limsui
- Richard & Carol
- Ray Anthony (†)

Aida & Genaro Yap (†)
- Edwin & Merle
- Carolyn & Ho Ben Tiu
- Wendell & Gina
- Jocelyn & Ronald Tan
- Kenneth & Jolil

Rou Wei & Yi Gang Wang (†)
- Zhi Feng & Yu Yan
- Xu Chu & Liu Wei
- Dai Song & Li Tan

An Log & Violeta
- Alvin & Trina
- Martin & Carolyn
- Sherwin
- Reggie Hannah

An Sun & Lina
- Mark & Gina
- Jake & Kristel
- Frank
- Nanak Donsaint
- Catherine Grace

An Ka (†) & Chui Ping
- Daniel & Anastacia
- Raizel & Winston Suen
- Jeffrey
- Kathleen

Ti Lan & Rodolfo Bayawa
- Jean
- Jessica
- Jerome
- Jucque Timothy

An Long & Preciosa
- Stephen
- Jennifer
- Christopher
- Daniel

great-grandchildren, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Chapel of Faith,
Rolling Hills Memorial Chapels,
Mandalagan, Bacolod City.

Interment will be on Friday, March 31, 2006 at 9:00 A.M.
at the Greenhills Memorial Park, Bacolod City.

WANTED IMMEDIATELY

FOR EXPANSION IN METRO MANILA SOUTHERN & NORTHERN LUZON

OFFICE TRAINEES:

Loan Processor, Posting Clerk, Bookkeeper
- Female, single, not more than 30 years old
- Graduate of any busines course
- Willing to be assigned in different areas
- With pleasing Personality, Hardworking and Trustworthy

FIELD TRAINEES:

Collector, Credit Investigator, Marketing Man
- Male, not more than 30 years old
- At least college level preferably college graduate
- Knows how to drive motorcycle, with Professional/Non-professional license
- Willing to be assigned in different areas
- Hardworking, Trustworthy & can work under pressure

If qualified, send your resumé to or apply in person at ***Advance Credit Corporation****, 23rd Flr., Tower 1, The Enterprise Center, 6766 Ayala Ave. cor. Paseo de Roxas, Makati City.*
Look for Ms. Marife Mandegoria or
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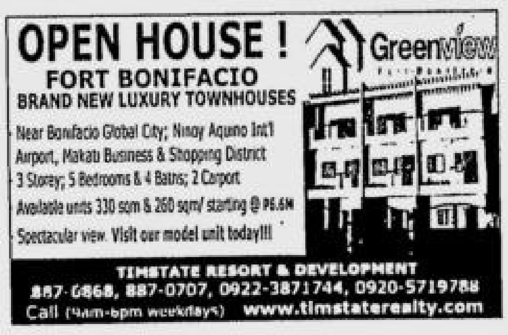
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NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION

In compliance with Section 5 of R.A. No. 9048, a notice is hereby served to the public that Ester L. Mellcor has filed with this Office a petition for change of first name from Marina to Ester in the Certificate of Live Birth of Marina Lee who was born on December 9, 1948 at Manila City and whose parents are Luis Lee and Julita Soriano.

Any person adversely affected by said petition may file his written opposition within this office not later than March 28, 2006.

(Sgd.) NORMA S. DIPUTADO
City Civil Registrar

(PDI - March 20 & 27, 2006)

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> *Into your hand I entrust my spirit;*
> *You redeem me, O Lord, Faithful God...*
> Psalm 31

Our Dearly Beloved

Presentacion Mallillin vda. de Dario

(November 21, 1939 - March 25, 2006)

Peacefully joined our Lord at the age of 66.
Loving wife of Pompeyo Z. Dario, Sr. (†)

She is survived by her mother **Anna Torralba vda. de Mallillin**; children **Anna & Joey, Popong & Nella, Gerry & Gigi, Titus & Niña, Anton & Cora, Inggay & Rex, Yrynne & Opet, Rodel & Gina, Rommel & Phannie, Arthur & Sery**, and **Alex**; brothers & sisters; grandchildren & relatives request their friends and pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at St. Peter Memorial Chapel, Quezon Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be at Manila Memorial Park, Dasmariñas, Cavite on the date to be announced later.

S&P not ready to raise RP rating

By Doris C. Dumlao

CLARK, PAMPANGA—CREDIT RATING FIRM Standard & Poor's still wants more proof that the Philippine government can sustain its fiscal progress before S&P can raise its "stable" outlook on sovereign credit rating to "positive."

Speaking before the Economic Journalist Association of the Philippines-San Miguel Corp. business writing seminar here, S&P associate director Agost Benard on Saturday said that the most important trigger for a better sovereign ratings outlook would be further improvement of the country's fiscal situation.

A change in outlook means that the government has a big chance of getting a credit rating upgrade anytime within the next two years.

"What we need to see is whether (the fiscal measures) will yield the kind of revenues that was planned," Benard said. "So I think first of all we'll have to wait and see, at the end of the day, how much extra money government will get from (the measures)."

Over the past several months, the government has implemented key fiscal measures to generate additional revenues that will be used to lower the country's budget deficit.

He stressed that since S&P had already changed its outlook on Philippine sovereign debt to "stable" from "negative" only last February, it would be "unusual" to expect another move within this semester.

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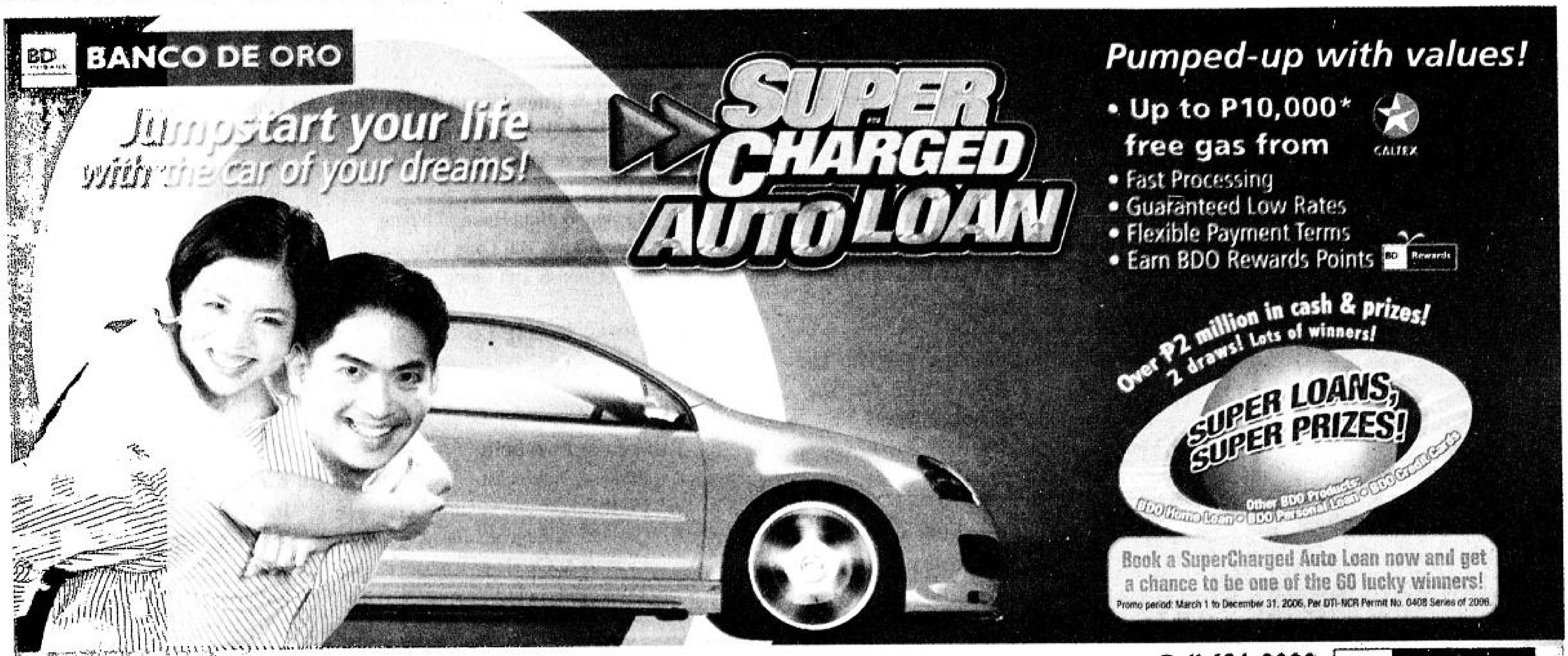

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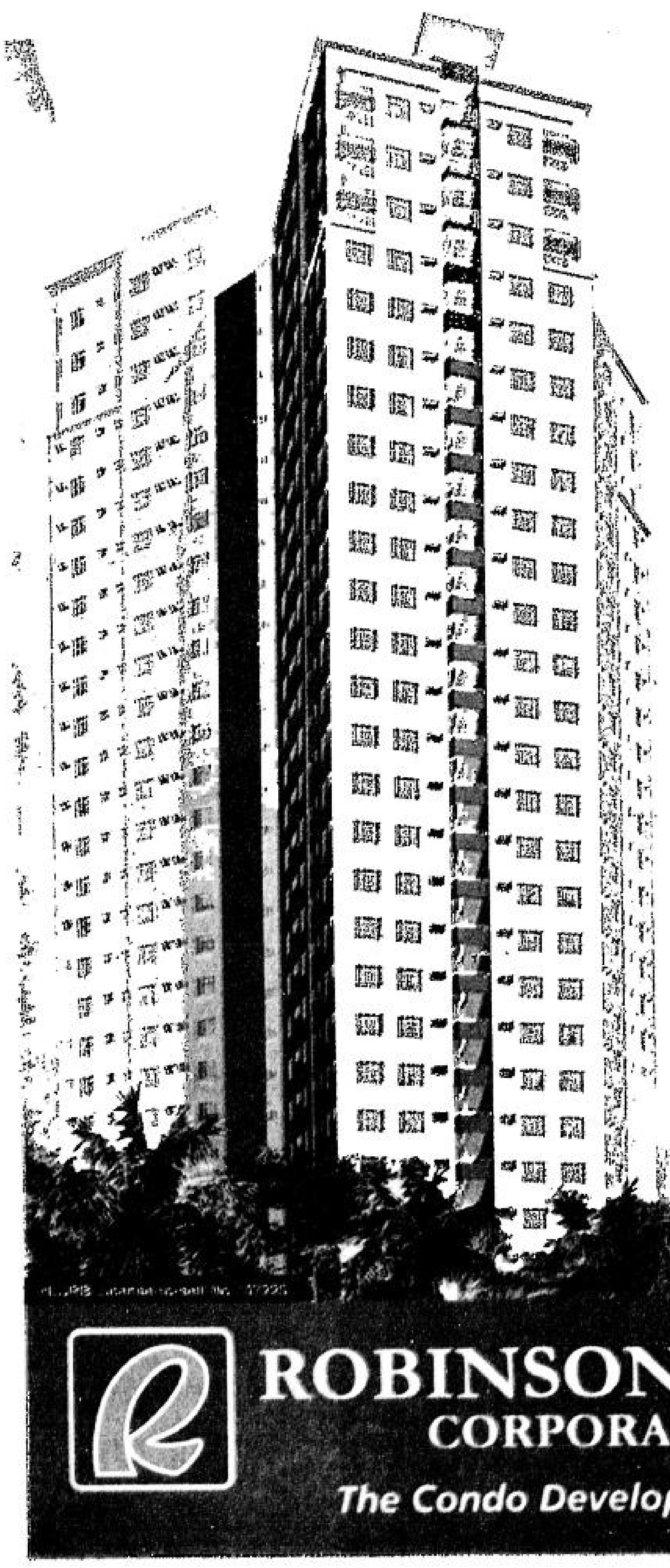

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bago ang April 17 deadline
21 DAYS TO GO
Ang Ating Kontribusyon Sa Solusyon

Watch out for the hidden costs

In the Visayas, tuition hikes are minimal but the extra costs add up

By Hazel P. Villa
PDI Visayas Bureau

Second of a series

ILOILO CITY—WITH ALMOST all prices going up these days, how much do parents have to spend this school opening to get their children educated?

In Western Visayas, free public education in pre-school, elementary and high school is a misnomer as parents pay more for "hidden expenses" like maintenance of buildings, school activities, projects and other incidentals throughout the school year.

While fees in public schools may be bearable, the day-to-day expenses of school children in the barrios and the cities have gone up, according to regional Department of Education officials here.

College levels

The private tertiary level known as Higher Education Institutions (HEI) by the Commission on Higher Education (CHEd) may not have hiked their tuition, but some have increased their "other fees" which does not need CHEd approval.

Some state universities and colleges have also devised bracketing and "ladderized" systems to justify their tuition hikes.

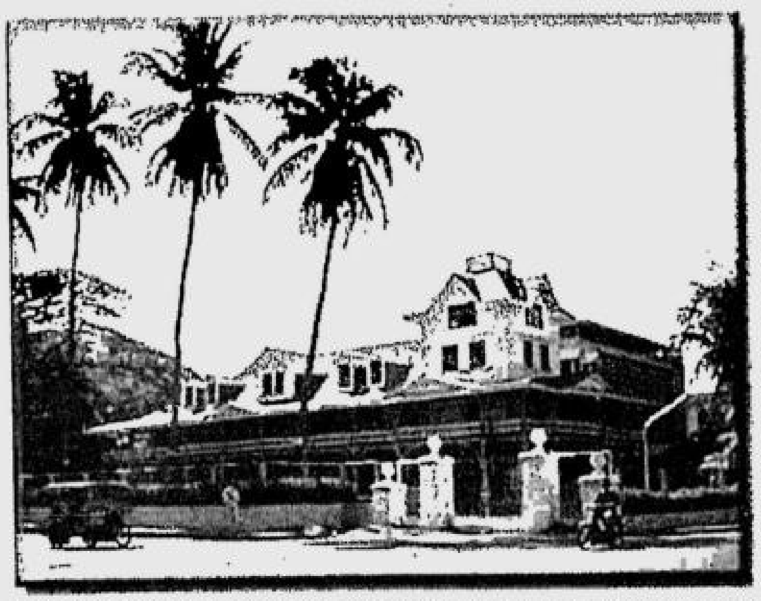
The DepEd Regional Planning Unit projects that 479,474 private and public high school students will be enrolling for school year 2006-2007, up by 8,259 students from last school year's figures.

In the elementary level, about 1,017,501 pupils all over Western Visayas are expected to enroll, compared to last school year's 999,975. The DepEd Regional Planning Unit also projects 50,208 pre-school children to start school.

The parents of these school children may find it gratifying to pay only P150 upon enrollment, such as in the case of a typical public elementary school like M.V Hechanova Memorial School (MVHMS) in Jaro District, Iloilo City. The amount will cover the Parents Teachers Community Association (PTCA) fee (P100), pupil-related activity (P20), library donation (P10), clinic donation (P10) and the Red Cross (P10). The Boy Scout and Girl Scout registration fees of P35 each are not compulsory.

DepEd-authorized public school miscellaneous fees are for the Anti-Tuberculosis Campaign, Red Cross, Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts for a total of P20. Schools also have to decide whether they are going to charge the non-compulsory minimum school paper fee of P40 for elementary and P50 for high school, considering that public schools are mandated to come up with school papers yearly.

However, like other public schools, MVHMS has to contend with expenses for daily maintenance, school activities and projects, and participation in competitions or community affairs—forcing it to present a list of expenses to the PTCA, which in turn will ask help from the parents. Payments would be in staggered basis throughout the school year. This is where the "hidden cost of education" lies, where a parent shells out several thousands of pesos.



UNIVERSITIES in the Visayas, like Silliman University in Dumaguete City, have to struggle with rising costs.

"How a school manages its expenses depends on the management style of the school head and the PTCA. Most school collections for various expenses are done through the Homeroom PTCA with the class adviser presenting expenses to them and the PTCA deciding on and collecting the contributions," said Filipino Education supervisor Sonia Jereso, who also serves as officer in charge of the DepEd Regional Elementary Division.

The DepEd still enforces the "Authorized Voluntary Contribution Policy" this year as in the last three years where the PTCA controls, determines and collects the fees for the school paper and other fees "deemed necessary" upon concurrence with the teachers and the principal.

Since teachers have been forbidden to collect and keep school fees two years ago up to the present, the job goes to the treasurer of the PTCA.

The parents are brave. They now question the expenses that they have to pay for," said Jereso, adding that the DepEd is always swamped with complaints about school fees during enrollment.

At the government-funded West Visayas State University Integrated Laboratory School, elementary school students have to shell out P8,000 for miscellaneous fees on enrollment.

Typical public high schools, said the Regional DepEd, would charge not more than P500 per student this school year. However, if the fees are more than that, these may get the approval of the PTCA and the school board who have the authority to charge fees as long as approved by the parents.

High school expenses

This year's day-to-day expenses related to schooling have also gone up. High school and elementary students in the towns and villages of Western Visayas, according to DepEd, need to have an allowance of P30 to P60 a day while their city counterparts need about P60 to P200 a day for food, transportation and school needs.

"Daily food and projects are the main concerns of students and their parents. We tell teachers that projects should be the outgrowth of lessons and not something where students have to buy so many materials," says Dr. Eduardo Peñaranda, assistant chief of the DepEd Regional Secondary Division.

Expensive transport fees

Just reaching school itself is already a great expense. Peñaranda cited some schools in Negros Occidental and Capiz where high school students had to pay P100 one way to ride a "habal-habal" or a motorcycle with wooden planks on the sides that can seat as many as eight people.

"This is just a small percentage of students. What these students do is to ride with friends but still, the rest drop out eventually because of expenses like these," says Peñaranda.

Suzette Pamplona, senior education program specialist of the DepEd Regional Planning Unit says for school year 2004-2005, they recorded 32,924 secondary students who dropped out of school. These represent seven percent of the total student population in Western Visayas. At the elementary level, two percent or 25,772 dropped out of school.

"Students drop out especially during planting or harvesting season when they have to help their parents," says Pamplona.

"There is no such thing as free education right now because government has no budget. The cost of education is too expensive," says Ruby Magbanua, coordinator of the Panay Alliance of Concerned teachers.

Magbanua says the Philippine educational system would greatly improve if the government channeled income from revenue collections to increasing the budget for education instead of debt servicing that takes up 40 percent of the national budget.

Private education

Parents who enroll their children in private schools face staggering tuition fees. Private schools need DepEd approval of tuition fee hikes.

In a high-end school like the Westbridge School for Boys in Iloilo City, parents of an elementary pupil will have to pay P27,531 for tuition and P5,000 for miscellaneous fees. High school fees in the same school run from P31,888 to P43,248 a year.

Assumption Iloilo has yet to release its tuition rate but based on

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Corporate governance in the Philippine Stock Exchange

MAPPING THE FUTURE

Francisco Ed. Lim

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO ADD a significant premium to your company's value without embarking on a new or expansion project?

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Well studies have shown that the secret lies in practicing good corporate governance.

For instance, a study by Credit Lyonnais Securities Asia in Hong Kong has established a strong co-relationship between corporate governance and stock market performance.

The research, which focused on 495 listed companies in 25 emerging markets worldwide, noted that the top 100 listed companies surveyed yielded a 23.5-percent return on capital employed.

But that's not really the most interesting point. The gist of the survey was found elsewhere, and it said that companies that are ranked in the top quarter of corporate governance yielded a higher average return on capital employed of 33.8 percent.

A fairly recent presentation in the US Securities and Exchange Commission International Institute for Securities Market Development has validated the Credit Lyonnais study, saying investors are willing to pay between 12 and 30 percent premium for corporate governance.

The Credit Lyonnais study was done way back in 2001. So, obviously a lot of corporations just ignored—or just paid lip service—to its message.

But our collective attitude towards good corporate governance changed after financial scandals rocked several giant global enterprises.

As an offshoot of these scandals ... it dawned on businesses all over the world that profits, and size alone, do not create a good company image and investments. In order to maintain a wholesome public image, corporations are now expected, not only to make money, but to make money in a proper way.

Good corporate governance has gained added urgency as rating companies adopt it as a critical yardstick in assessing the performance of corporations.

In the Philippines good governance may be a fairly recent development, but even this early some local companies have earned high marks in this area. Results of a survey conducted by the Institute of Corporate Directors (ICD) and the Capital Market Development Council (CMDC) attest to this.

A recent ICD-CMDC survey has measured the corporate governance performance of 49 publicly listed companies, whose stocks represented 90 percent of the market capitalization of the Philippine Stock Exchange.

Ayala Land, Inc., Bank of the Philippine Islands, Petron Corporation and PLDT topped the Corporate Governance Scorecard of the ICD-CMDC.

RP doing better

In fact, the ICD said that the Philippines is doing better than Hong Kong in practicing good corporate governance. The ICD study also noted that the Philippines is just slightly behind the commendable steps being taken by Thailand and China in the area of good corporate governance.

But still some analysts say that East-Asian economies as a whole lag behind their Western counterparts, because many companies in this region remain family owned or controlled.

The worry is that, when a director-owner of a company is confronted by situations where his or her interest conflicts with that of other stockholders, the director-owner will sacrifice the interest of the others.

At the Philippine Stock Exchange, we strive to prevent conflict-of-interest situations by coming out with stringent disclosure rules that apply even to non-listed companies. These rules apply, if information about these non-listed firms has a material effect on the business and price of the listed affiliate or sister company.

Even if we are uncompromising on this score, affected family-controlled conglomerates accept the PSE's rules on disclosure. In fact, some of these family-controlled firms have won accolades as models of corporate governance.

Zealous disciples

I earlier cited the example of Ayala Land and BPI, which are controlled by the Zobel family. But they are not the only zealous disciples of good corporate governance among the listed conglomerates.

Take as another example SM Prime Holdings Inc. of Mr. Henry Sy's family. For two consecutive years now, SM Prime has been adjudged the best in corporate governance in the Philippines by The Asset Magazine.

Asia Money, on the other hand, has named SM Prime the best managed company in the Philippines and the fifth-best managed company in the whole Asia-Pacific region last year.

But awards and citations are not the only just rewards that these families get in exchange for giving up some of their powers for the sake of good corporate citizenship.

We can cite studies that show the value of the stocks of these family-owned corporations has grown and continue to grow after they became public corporations. That's the best enticement a businessman can get for being a good corporate citizen of the PSE, although we admit it is not the only factor that assures a thriving business.

PSE's role

But you will probably ask: What's the role of the PSE in their awards?

Awards like those that the Ayalas and Sys get make people at the PSE happy, because these accolades are coming when it so happens that we are implementing reforms at the PSE.

The reform process accelerated five years ago, when the PSE was transformed from a non-profit, member-governed organization to a profit-oriented stock corporation with functions of a self-regulatory organization, mandated to regulate the stock market.

Demutualization, or the conversion from a non-stock, non-profit organization to a for-profit stock corporation, got a boost by the listing of the PSE in December 2003.

Eight members of the PSE's 15-man Board of Directors are non-brokers, and three of them are independent directors. Last year, the Exchange reached a milestone in its 79-year history when the Board elected Peter Favila as PSE's first non-broker Chairman.

Mr. Favila has since joined the government as Secretary of the Department of Trade and Industry, but he was replaced by another prominent independent director, retired Supreme Court Associate Justice Jose Vitug. Last year also marked the first time in the history of the Exchange that both its president and chair are non-brokers.

But we at the PSE know that we cannot be complacent, so we continue to introduce reforms to discourage irregularities and meet the ever-increasing demand of investors for better protection of their money.

That's why we also have tightened our disclosure rules and we now have what we call the Blackout Rule. This rule prohibits directors or officers of a listed company from trading their company's own shares right after they obtain material non-public information. The ban will last for two days even after they have made the proper disclosure of the information to the Exchange.

Then we have the Selective Disclosure Rule, and it prohibits an issuer from disclosing material non-public information to a selected group of persons, like a director or officer, without simultaneously disclosing the same information to the Exchange.

Listed companies are likewise required to disclose within 10 minutes from receipt or occurrence any material information, such as a corporate act, development or event, that affects the price of the stock in the market.

This is done through our Online Disclosure System, a facility that allows the prompt and simultaneous electronic dissemination of corporate disclosures and announcements to investors, trading participants and the general public via the PSE website. This allows the investing public to access corporate disclosures 24/7.

However, as reported by ICD, the positive relationship between high corporate governance scores and actual market performance is still small in the Philippines.

We accept the observation as a challenge to improve on our rules on corporate governance so it would make a big difference on the market's actual performance.

The issue is not so much a matter of guidelines and legal framework but one of implementation and proper enforcement. But, as pointed out in the US study I earlier mentioned, the 12- to 30-percent premium on company value is a good incentive for listed companies to behave.

Furthermore, a firm commitment to practice good corporate governance provides benefits to individual companies in the form of better internal organizational control, enhanced image, and improved credit ratings.

It is also worth noting that, as good corporate governance serves as come-on for more investments, it in turn becomes a crucial role in funding new business ventures and providing new employment opportunities for ordinary Filipinos.

Of course, we know that more employed Filipinos means more consumers and more business and more growth.

As we put in place more reforms, questions regarding good corporate governance arise. For instance: What techniques should the Philippines adopt to induce our companies to embrace a culture of corporate governance? Should we adopt lock-stock-and-barrel the corporate governance of other countries or should we adapt such a system to our local conditions? If so, to what extent should we "localize" corporate governance standards? If we decide to do this, how will the global marketplace, particularly foreign investors, receive it?

These are some of the questions that hopefully will be answered in the near future.

But even as we implement reforms to comply with good governance practices, I look forward to the day when these issues would have become irrelevant.

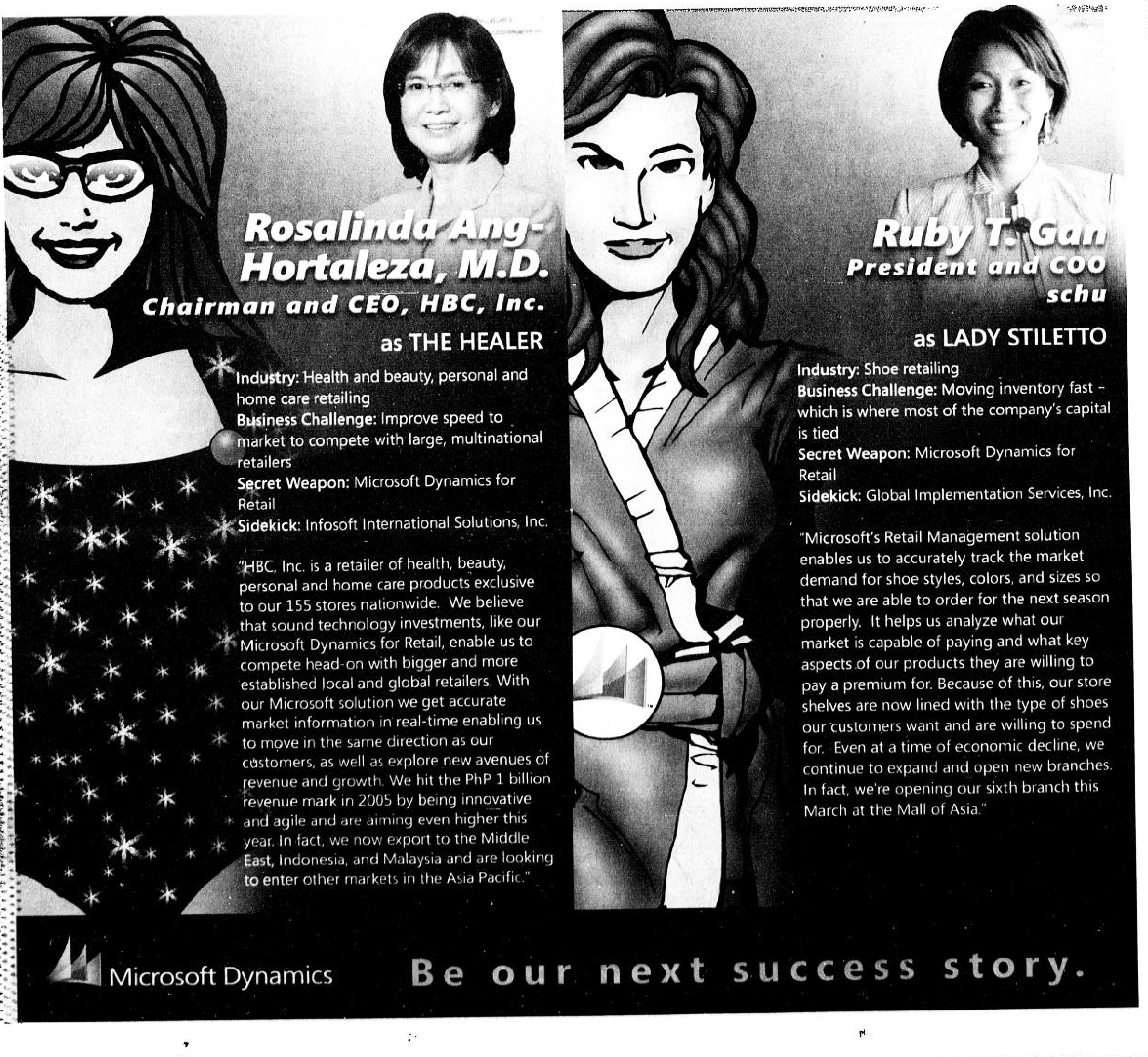
Why irrelevant?

Because I believe there will come a time when good governance practices will become our SECOND NATURE. I dream of that day when good governance practices would have become an intrinsic part of our business culture: a culture that will require minimal regulation from us, the Philippine Stock Exchange, and from the Securities and Exchange Commission.

And I see this award on best annual report as part of building that culture. I, therefore, propose that the Philippine Stock Exchange and the Management Association of the Philippines, together with the Securities and Exchange Commission, institutionalize a partnership on this project as a means of nurturing a culture of corporate governance among our listed companies.

Institutionalizing a new culture of good governance is indeed a tall order. But THAT'S the challenge I will hurl to all of you and the Management Association of the Philippines tonight.

(Edited speech delivered by the author during the 3rd MAP "Best Annual Report" Awards Night. Feedback at mapsec@globenet.com.ph



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Ruby T. Gan
President and COO
schu
as LADY STILETTO

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Business Challenge: Moving inventory fast – which is where most of the company's capital is tied
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Sidekick: Global Implementation Services, Inc.

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From page B2-1

last year's fees, an elementary school paid about P29,000 while a high school student pays from P30,000 to P32,000.

A pre-schooler of Ateneo de Iloilo (formerly Sta. Maria Catholic School) pays about P27,342. Elementary students, pay around P30,000 to P40,000 while secondary school students pay from P35,000 to P45,000. These include miscellaneous fees.

At the tertiary level, fees have slightly gone down because fewer students enrolled due to lack of money, said CHEd.

The Regional CHEd reports tuition rates dropped an average of 10 to 11 percent the last two school years. Students pay P270 to P848 per unit.

Dr. Freddie Maningo, CHEd Education Supervisor II, said out of 74 Higher Education Institutions in Western Visayas, only less than 20 as of this month have applied for tuition increases compared to last year's 23.

Maningo adds that some HEI's increase their "other fees," something that CHEd does not have any control.

CHEd also reports that in the last two years, the same HEIs charge fees of P600 to P850 per unit in their graduate schools (masteral and doctoral levels).

Public universities

It's a different story altogether with government-subsidized universities like the University of the Philippines in the Visayas and the West Visayas State University that both have the Socialized Tuition and Financial Assistance Program.

UPV uses the income bracket system through consultations with the student and verification of his economic status while WVSU uses the "ladderized" system where students submit the necessary requirements upon enrollment and the administration determines what bracket the student belongs, imposing different tuition and other fees for every year level with the first year students paying the most.

The National Union of Students of the Philippines claims in its research that in the last 13 years, 83.6 percent of the total population of the UP system are paying their full matriculation fee and only 8.6 percent belong to brackets 1 to 5 or students who do not pay other fees.

"UP's bracket system and WVSU's ladderized system are actually different forms of tuition fee increases," said Karen Edaniel, Iloilo Anakbayan chair and a graduate of Political Science and Sociology from UPV.

> Tuition here has dropped 10-11%, CHEd says

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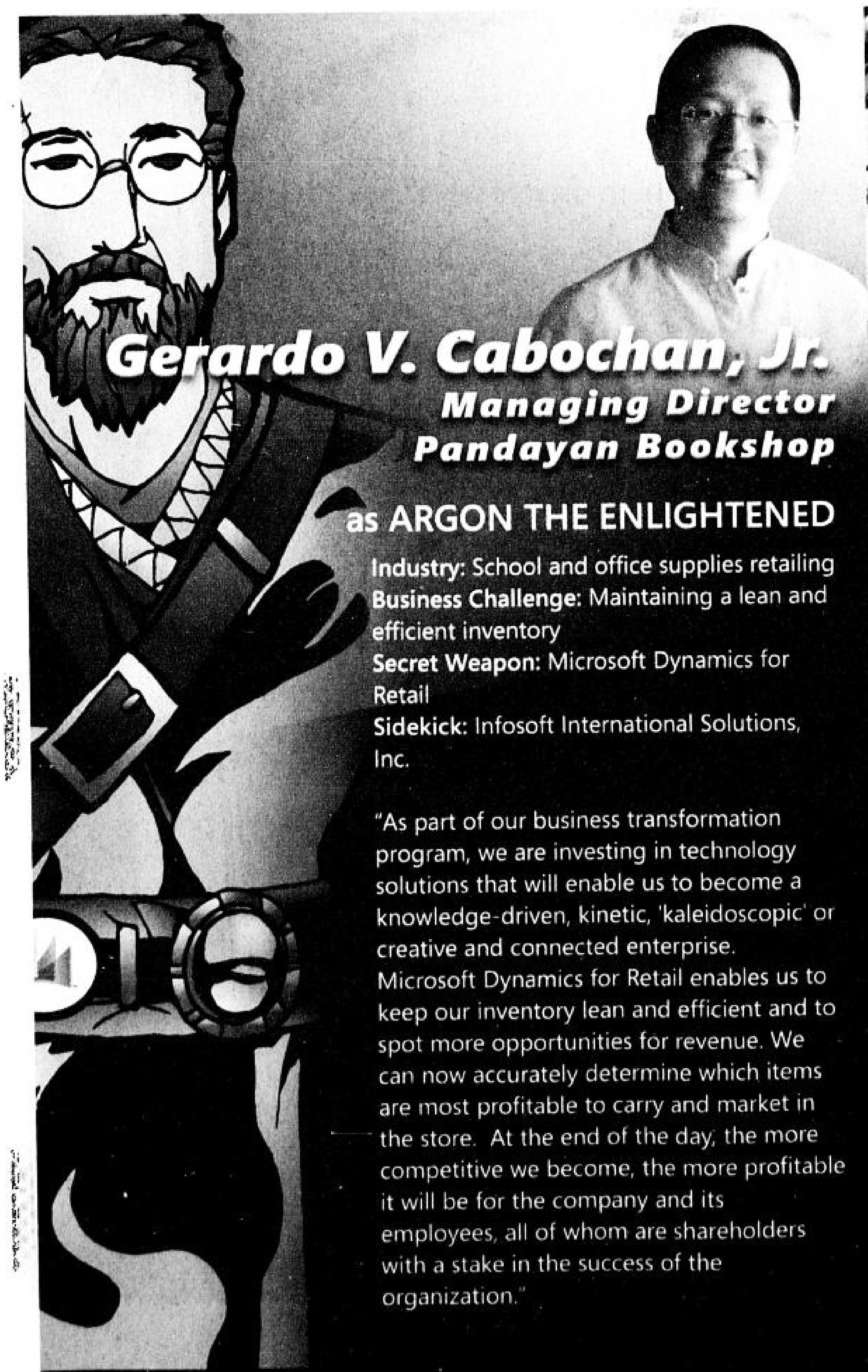

Gerardo V. Cabochan, Jr.
Managing Director
Pandayan Bookshop

as ARGON THE ENLIGHTENED

Industry: School and office supplies retailing
Business Challenge: Maintaining a lean and efficient inventory
Secret Weapon: Microsoft Dynamics for Retail
Sidekick: Infosoft International Solutions, Inc.

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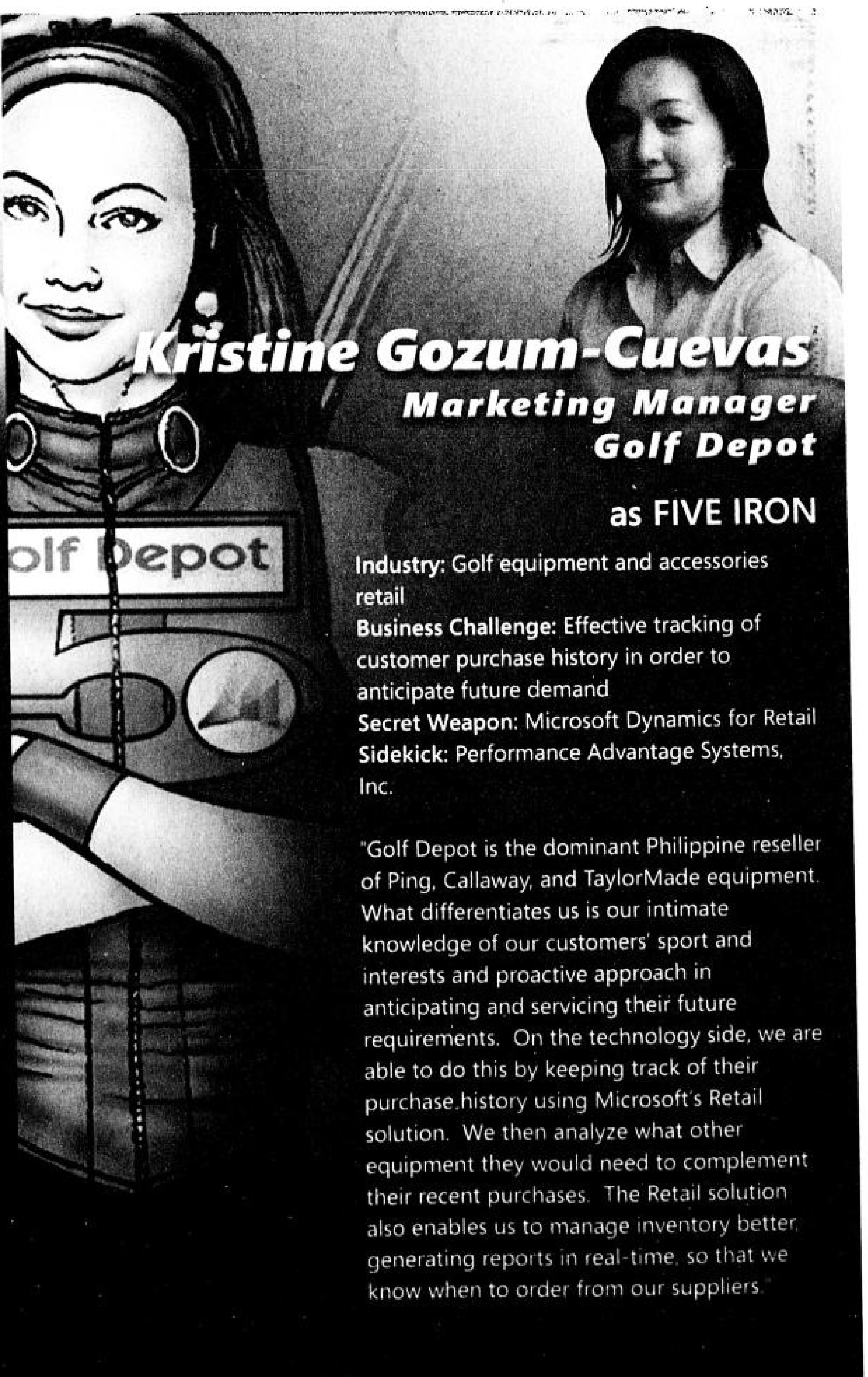


Kristine Gozum-Cuevas
Marketing Manager
Golf Depot

as FIVE IRON

Industry: Golf equipment and accessories retail
Business Challenge: Effective tracking of customer purchase history in order to anticipate future demand
Secret Weapon: Microsoft Dynamics for Retail
Sidekick: Performance Advantage Systems, Inc.

"Golf Depot is the dominant Philippine reseller of Ping, Callaway, and TaylorMade equipment. What differentiates us is our intimate knowledge of our customers' sport and interests and proactive approach in anticipating and servicing their future requirements. On the technology side, we are able to do this by keeping track of their purchase history using Microsoft's Retail solution. We then analyze what other equipment they would need to complement their recent purchases. The Retail solution also enables us to manage inventory better, generating reports in real-time, so that we know when to order from our suppliers."

Call the Microsoft Dynamics hotline at 672-7230 or visit www.microsoft.com/dynamics

Microsoft

Students tighten belts, spend wisely

Noodles and pan de sal for breakfast, budget meals for rest of day

By Edgar Alejo
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

LEGAZPI CITY—OUT OF THE 137 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Bicol, 17.5 percent or about one-fifth have increased their tuition for school year 2005-2006.

Aside from the increased tuition, students of these HEIs have to pay other school fees amounting to at least P3,000 upon enrollment.

But even with the escalating increase in the cost of tertiary education, Bicolano parents who value their family's future give top priority to their children's education through college.

For instance, to government employee Roger Nobleza of Daraga, Albay, who has no property and business investment to fall back on, education is still the most important legacy he can leave his children.

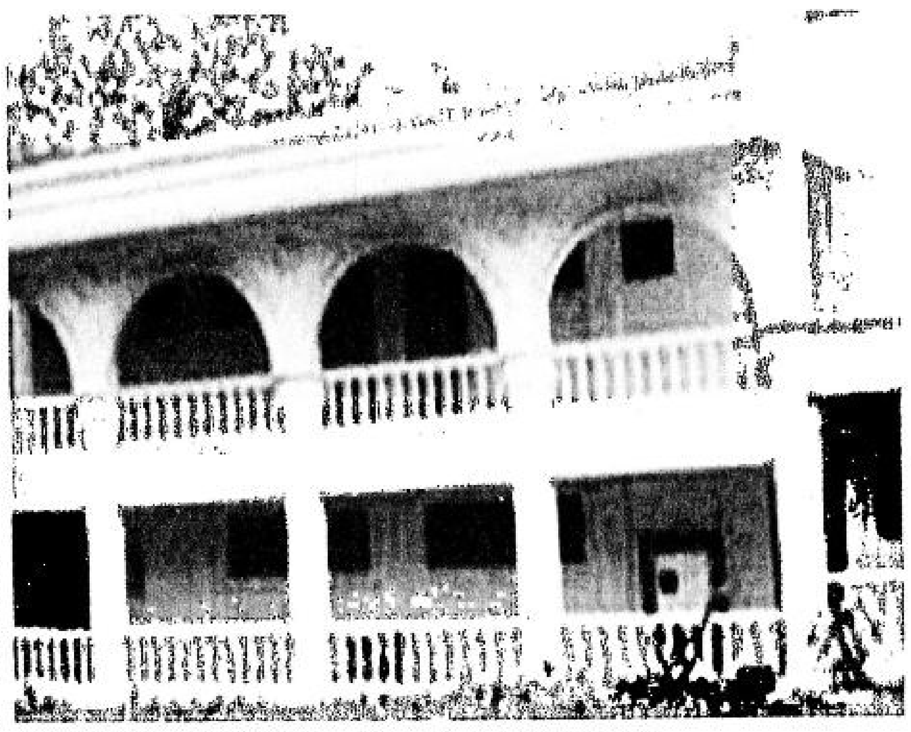
Aware of this problem, students have to do their share of "wise" spending and belt tightening.

Student Rosemarie Orias, 20, of Aroroy, Masbate, says that with the P2,000 monthly allowance her parents send her, she's able to survive by taking budget meals for lunch and dinner and settling for noodles and pan de sal for breakfast.

As a bedspacer, she shares a room with three others at a boarding house near the school for P650 each.

Miles Garcia, 19, of Pioduran, Albay, rents a small room with her sister Lourdes for P800 at a boarding house across from their school. Miles is a third year commerce student while Lourdes is taking up a two-year entrepreneurship course in a private school in this city.

The sisters try to budget their combined P4,000 monthly allowance by cooking their own food and adopting some cost-cutting measures.



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION building at the Bicol University.

Tuition hikes

Topping the list of HEIs that have increased their fees are the University of Nueva Caceres (UNC) in Naga City, now at P572/unit in all courses, except engineering which is at P614.50/unit; Ateneo de Naga University (AdNU), with P541.05/unit in regular subjects; and Aquinas University of Legazpi (AUL) with P327/unit in all courses.

The Divine Word College of Legazpi (DWCL), which did not increase its tuition of P317.30/unit in all undergraduate courses this schoolyear, will impose a tuition hike next schoolyear.

Fr. Alejandro Gobenciong, DWCL vice president for finance, said that pursuant to the Commission on Higher Education (CHEd) Memo Order No. 14, series of 2005, a 7.6-percent increase in tuition , which is equivalent to the national inflation rate, will be adopted by the DWCL.

At the Bicol University (BU), a public HEI, the tuition is only from P150-P175/unit plus about P2,400 for miscellaneous and other school fees. But in order to qualify as a student of this premier state university in the region, one should pass the BU entrance examination, the BU Admissions Office said.

Thus, as an example, taking the tuition of AUL of P327/unit in all courses and taking the case of student Rosemarie Orias with P2,000 monthly allowance and one-third of P650 as her share in the boarding house, parents would have to shell out P5,886.00 a semester for 18 units, plus P10,000 for allowance, plus P217 (one-third of P650) times 5 months or P1,085 for board, plus P3,000 for other fees—or a total of P19,971 per semester, excluding books.

Enrollment status

As of schoolyear 2004-2005, there were 42,584 students enrolled in public schools while 63,448 students were registered in private schools all over the region, the CHEd-Bicol reported.

Of the 106,032 total enrollees, 21,567 are taking up education; business management, 19,381; health-related programs, 15,615; arts and sciences, 9,244; and information technology, 9,233.

Meantime, CHEd-Bicol has intensified its implementation of its Institutional Monitoring and Evaluation for Quality Assurance (Iquame), aimed at maintaining and improving the quality of tertiary education in all disciplines in Bicol.

In an interview, CHEd-Bicol regional director Dominador Peralta says their mandate is not only to ensure the quality and excellence of the HEIs through massive monitoring and evaluation but also to assure relevance and responsiveness through regular review and updating of their curricular offerings.

CHEd-Bicol further oversees the efficiency and effectiveness of the HEIs in their allocation of resources and management of financial operations as the commission provides access and equity through its various scholarship programs.

Peralta says applicants for government scholarships with funding from the CHEd are now required to take the National Scholarship Qualifying Examinations (NSQE).

On Sunday, about 1,200 examinees across the region took the first NSQE at three testing centers in Bicol—AUL and DWCL in Legazpi City, and UNC in Naga City.

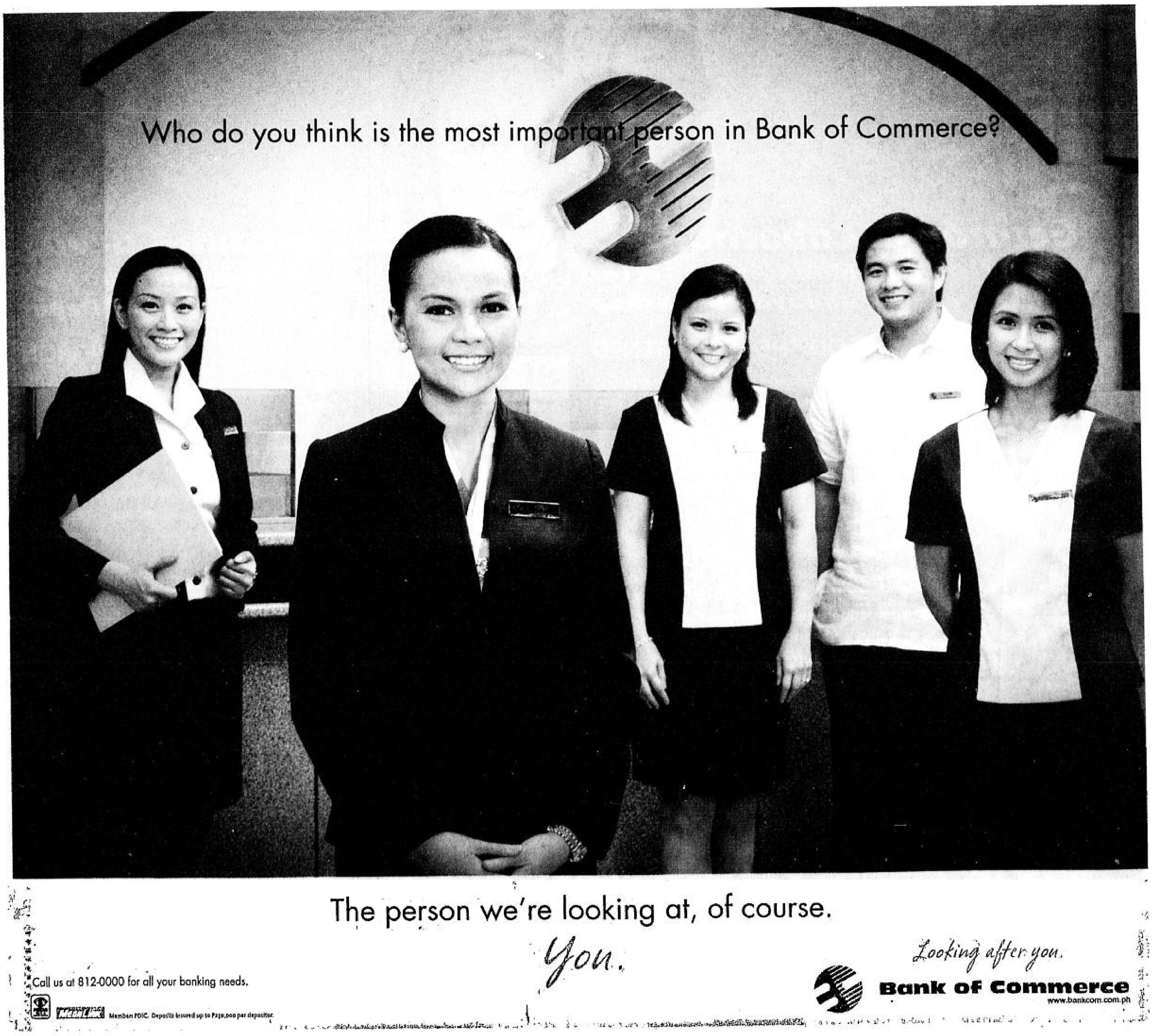
Medical transcription jobs up

"THE DEMAND FOR MEDICAL TRANScriptionists (MT) continues to rise. In 2005 alone, 5,500 Filipino MTs were already employed. This year, it is projected that 8,300 more will be hired and given job opportunities either as transcriptionists, editors or trainors," stated Commission on Information and Communications Technology (CICT) Commissioner Damian "Dondi" Mapa.

Mapa was the keynote speaker during the launch of e-Transcription Training Solutions and Innovations (e-TTSI, the learning enterprise of TOTAL Transcription Solutions Inc. (TTSI), a Philippine offshore facility that provides medical transcription services to the US health care market.

"In spite of this urgent need, however, not everybody aspiring for a medical transcription job is qualified. And this is where, I think, the Philippines, should position itself. We need to strengthen our training systems and programs," adds Myla Rose Reyes, TTSI managing director and Medical Transcription Industry Association of the Philippines (MTIAPI) vice president. e-TTSI is aimed at enabling educational institutions and learning centers to produce professionally competent medical transcriptionists (MTs) in a cost-effective manner.

e-TTSI is made up of three components: the MT Preparatory (MT Prep) course, an intensive 18-hour orientation course that provides students with a fundamental understanding of medical transcription and will help gauge their suitability to enter a formal MT training program; the Entry-Level MT Program (ELMT), an online curriculum that readies students for the entry-level employment as MTs in the industry; and the MT Tutor Online (MTTO), providing unlimited access to simulated doctor-dictated reports, enabling users to practice their skills in near-authentic work environments as often as they want, anytime, anywhere.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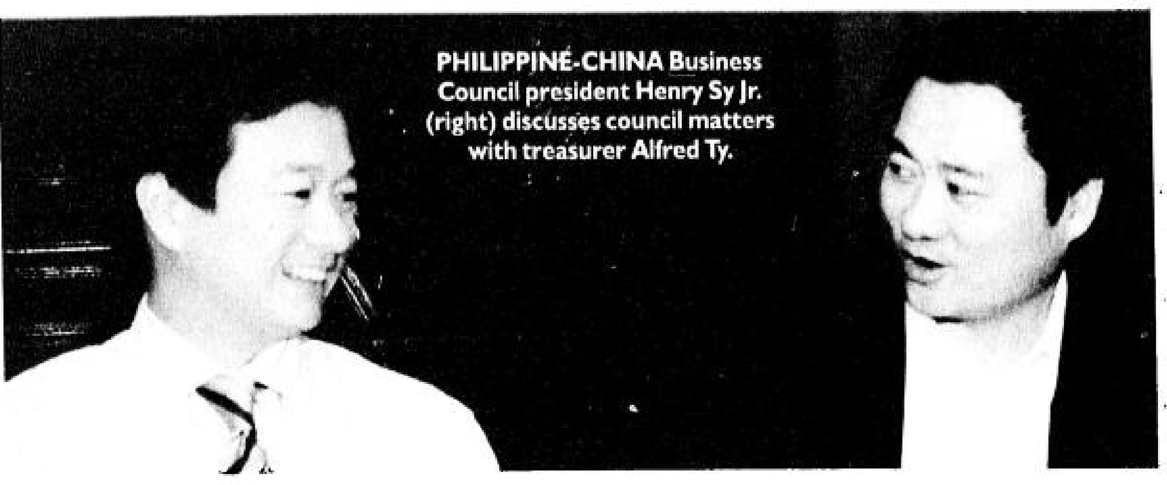
BUSINESS*Monday*

Junior taipans to ask China to invest in RP

Council promotes local shores, to focus on mining and tourism

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao


PHILIPPINE-CHINA Business Council president Henry Sy Jr. (right) discusses council matters with treasurer Alfred Ty.

FROM CHINA THEY CAME AND TO CHINA THEY ARE GOING back. This is the strategy adopted by the young heirs of the taipans who have banded together under the Philippine-China Business Council, to lead the campaign to get more Chinese investors to take advantage of business opportunities in the Philippines.

The council was formed last year to promote economic relations between the two countries, and who better to bridge the gap than the Chinese-Filipino businessmen here. Never mind if they are bitter rivals in their fields of business, for in this vision, they are one.

Elected president of the newly formed council is SM Prime Holdings executive vice president Henry Sy Jr., son of retail magnate Henry Sy Sr., who told the INQUIRER that the council decided to focus its efforts in two areas—mining and tourism.

"We believe that these areas have the greatest potential of getting companies from China to invest in the Philippines," Sy said.

Tourism Secretary Joseph Durano said the council's faith in the potential of tourism was well founded as China is one of the fastest growing sources of tourists coming to the Philippines.

Durano said in a recent dinner hosted by the council at the Mandarin Oriental that tourist arrivals from China went up by 250 percent last year to 110,000 arrivals, from just 39,000 the previous year.

A similar growth rate was recorded in the first two months of the year, Durano said.

He added that with the pace unlikely to slow down in the near term, there was money to be made in the construction of new hotels and facilities catering to the tourist market, especially from China, Korea and Japan.

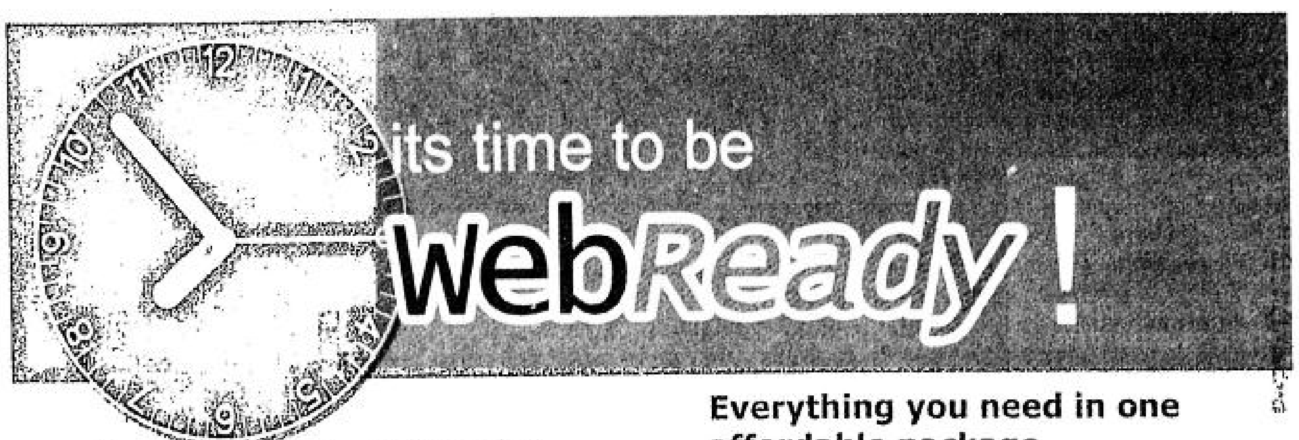
Durano recommended that these new facilities be put up at the beach destinations, such as Cebu, Bohol, Palawan and Boracay, because these were the favorites of the guests from north Asia.

Alfred V. Ty, president of Federaland, said in an interview that the rosy prospects for tourism was the primary reason behind the Metrobank group's move to revive the Cebu Plaza Hotel in Cebu, renamed Marco Polo Cebu.

Ty said eight floors have been opened, with nine more under renovation.

He placed total renovation and upgrading

JUNIOR/B3-2



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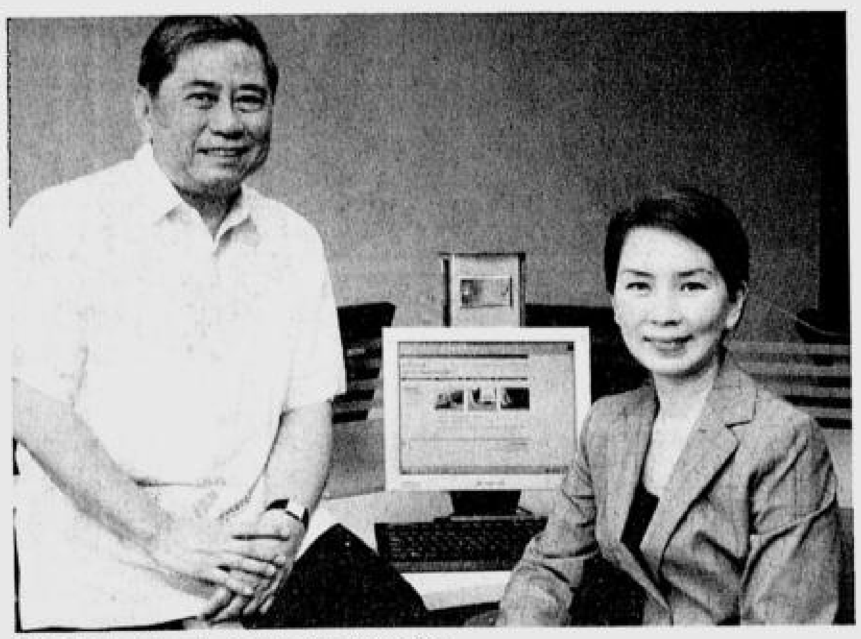
National Artist writes Pinoy website on wise use of credit

Credit cards can make or break your finances



VIRGILIO Almario and Cecille Fonacier

ASK A CREDIT CARD user if he knows the three Cs of credit and you will likely get a blank stare. But check his knowledge on his credit line balance and where to get the best shopping deals and you will probably get an earful.

While the number of credit cardholders has grown immensely in the last decade, very little has been done to educate them.

Some card companies have even expanded their target markets to include non-traditional segments such as students and housewives, who may not have the tools to fully understand their finances. The consequence of this move—both the card companies and the cardholders are left with debt they cannot service.

"Credit is a powerful tool. Credit cards can make managing your money easier, and can be especially useful during emergencies. But credit is also a big responsibility. When used improperly, it can disrupt your cash flow and even cause other problems," relates Cecille Fonacier, marketing director of Citibank Philippines, the country's largest credit card issuer.

Recognizing that a higher level of credit education is needed in the country, Citibank has initiated projects that promote not only better credit management, but also how to plan for a healthier financial future.

Its recent contribution is a Filipino version of its Use Credit Wisely website. For this project, Citibank commissioned National Artist for Literature Virgilio Almario to translate the English website to Filipino.

"Getting National Artist Virgilio Almario to handle the translation definitely secured the project's success. No other candidates were considered as we felt strongly about working with someone who is most familiar with the language, and more importantly, respects the Filipino audience," maintains Fonacier.

Almario, who is more popularly known by his pseudonym Rio Alma among literary circles, says, "As the country's largest foreign bank, Citibank takes pains to make themselves better understood by their consumers and the general public."

Almario considered working on the website a bit of a challenge: "It was my first time to translate a website and I had to ensure that the content is an easy read and a sure source of credit-related information that any reader, especially the *masa*, could use," recalled Almario, who is known for weaving beautiful verses in the vernacular. He has produced volumes of poem collections, among others, "Makinasyon at Ilang Tula," "Selected Poems 1968-1985," and "Una Kong Milenyum."

As a translator, he has translated the works of some of the world's best contemporary poets and playwrights, such as Nick Joaquin, Berrolt Brecht, Euripides, Maxim Gorki, among others.

Among the featured pages in the website include Alamin ang mga Tuntunin, which gives users information on all things about credit and how credit cards work. In the section Ingatan ang Paggastos, one can find details on gaining financial control and handling hard times such as living with a disability or how to cope following a marriage breakdown.

In Tiyaking may Proteksiyon, users are treated to information on fraud prevention, identity theft and knowing their legal rights. Finally, there's Dagdag na Impormasyon that alerts users on the latest credit information.

Almario believes it is a must for every Filipino to learn to speak and understand proper Filipino. "Hopefully with my translation of the Citibank Use Credit Wisely website, I would be able to further promote the use of Filipino language while helping them to understand better credit-related information."

To know more, log on to www.usecreditwisely.citibank.com.ph.

Rebuilding the old Cebu Plaza

By Doris C. Dumlao

CEBU CITY—WITH FINANCIAL MUSCLE from the country's biggest bank, Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co., the Marco Polo Hotels found an opportunity to partake of Cebu's booming tourism industry by reviving the foreclosed Cebu Plaza Hotel and repositioning it as a business travelers' preferred urban address.

By spending P800 million to rebuild the 329-room premier hotel in a province whose tourism industry is dominated by leisure estates on adjacent Mactan island (where the plush Shangri-La Hotel and the newly opened Hilton are), Marco Polo aims to bring more tourists to the city proper.

"We feel the Mactan properties serve the resort and leisure market that do not directly compete with the city," Marco Polo Plaza Cebu's general manager Hans Hauri tells a group of business reporters recently invited to the hotel's dry run.

"Our aim is not to take away business from the Mactan properties thinking they'll go over here. Our approach is (to think) how much more business can we get into the city that's looking for a product like Marco Polo Plaza," he says.

Marco Polo, which operates 10 other hotels in Asia, was invited by no less than Metrobank chair George Ty to join the bank's hotel venture in Cebu.

When the old Cebu Plaza opened its doors in the 1980s, the hotel industry in the Philippines wasn't well-developed, except for the few located in Makati, Hauri says.

The interior outfitting even then was very luxurious for its time, Hauri says.

"The location you can't take away, the reputation that goes way back in the early '80s is established, the emotions of the citizens of Cebu are inherent so it's now up to us to take advantage, to position ourselves," he says.

The pie is big enough for everyone and is even growing. Cebu, after all, is a top tourist haven, benefiting from the government's strategy to sell the Philippines as the nearest tropical destination to travelers from three vastly populated and affluent markets—China, Japan and Korea.

"Last year, Cebu City had an average occupancy of 75 percent which means it is a good time that new room inventories come into the market," he says.

But he hopes that the government, aside from focusing on its three East Asian markets, would also take advantage of huge business conference markets in nearby financial centers Hong Kong and Singapore.

Citing local statistics, Hauri says the boom in Cebu's tourism started sometime in 2003, at the time that the SARS hysteria erupted across the region with China as its epicenter. There was a reorientation toward tourist areas untouched by the SARS epidemic and the Philippines, including Cebu, was among the beneficiaries.

After the Asian currency crisis of 1997, Hauri says business confidence started to recover by the turn of the century and even the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States brought some positive windfall to Asia.

"It was actually a plus for Asia because people, instead of making long-haul holidays, started to reorient themselves to regional travel," Hauri notes.

Junior taipans to ask China . . .

From page B3-1

cost at around P800 million.

"Cebu is ideal because it has an international airport and the tourism industry here is booming," Ty said.

The Cebu Plaza Hotel shut down in 2003 due to some labor problems and has been listed as a bad asset in the books of Metrobank since then.

Ty said that with tourism arrivals picking up, the Metrobank group decided to convert the "bad" asset into a good one.

And the bet has been paying off with the Marco Polo Cebu getting its fair share of guests, even if work is still ongoing.

Ty said the Metrobank group's venture into the hotel industry has been smooth so far, and he has not closed the doors on the possibility of expanding this new line of business.

"We are going to digest this project first, but we are not closing the door to putting up more," Ty said.

The Lucio Tan group has also gotten into the tourism action in Cebu with the takeover of the foreclosed Coral Reef Resort, which used to be owned by a Japanese investor.

Lucio Tan Jr., however, declined to give details on the project, merely saying that it was still under evaluation.

It is not only Cebu that is feeling the growth in the hotel industry, so too is Metro Manila, where the bulk of the tourists go through to get to the beaches.

Anticipating a growth in demand for hotel rooms in Metro Manila, Sy said the SM group is set to close a management contract with an international hotel chain that will manage hotels to be put up near the SM group's Mall of Asia along Roxas Boulevard.

Aside from putting up hotels to support the tourism industry, Sy also broached the idea of getting Chinese-Filipino businessmen with facilities in China to put "Visit the Philippines" logos on their products to get more Chinese to visit the Philippines.

Sy said the SM group, for instance, could put these logos on the shopping bags of the SM malls in China.

Philippine Airlines Inc. and Cebu Pacific Inc. are also contributing to the growth with the expansion of their fleets and additional servicing of the China routes to bring in more tourists.

Cebu Pacific president Lance Gokongwei sits as internal vice president of the council while PAL president Jaime Bautista was elected corporate secretary.

Aside from getting Chinese investors to come to the Philippines, the council is also working to help Philippine firms take a piece of the big action in China.

Ambassador Jose E.B. Antonio said China was growing at an undeniably blistering pace, and presents great opportunities for expansion for local firms.

It was estimated that in 15 years, China would be the largest consumer market after the United States and Europe.

Council member George Siy, who operates the Marie France group in the Philippines, said in an interview that he was looking into the possibility of entering the cosmetics industry in China.

"I think we should ride the tide," Siy said, "We don't really need to have an overall advantage, we just need to be competitive in certain niches."

And the council is there to help companies do just that.

M2M conference set on March 30

THE NEW TECHNOLOGY CALLED Machine to Machine will be the topic of a half-day conference on March 30 at the New World Renaissance Hotel in Makati. The invitational event will present the new technology commonly known as M2M, and will have foreign and local experts as speakers.

Machine to Machine Interactive Intelligence Inc. (M2MI3) is hosting the conference to create awareness among potential system integrators and the end-user market about the technology of M2M Development Community; to educate the market with the various applications of M2M and its benefits; and to encourage prospective distributors and the end-user target market to apply this technology in their current operations.

M2M stands for Machine to Machine, Machine to Mobile, and Mobile to Machine communications. It can connect and enable an array of equipment from mainframes to everyday products (e.g. vehicles, home appliances, buildings, manufacturing equipment) and unleash new levels of smart services and commerce.

Currently, there are a number of successful implementations that exist for cell towers, oil and gas pipelines, vending machines, vehicles, security systems, water and electric metering, game systems, cargo and asset tracking that already yield significant results.

The main theme of the conference is M2M: Expanding Business Possibilities. Guest speakers are Angeles de Pablos of Sony Ericsson, who will talk about "Embracing M2M," an overview of M2M Technology.

For more information, visit www.m2m.com.ph. or call 813-4668.

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Ortigas Center, Pasig City
c/o Tel. No. 910-5013; 636-0629; 637-2797

NOTICE OF SPECIAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT A SPECIAL MEETING OF ALL STOCKHOLDERS OF APOLLO MINERAL RESOURCES, INC., will be held on 18 April 2006 in the afternoon at Unit G, 11th Floor, Strata 100 Building, F. Ortigas Jr. Avenue (formerly Emerald Avenue), Ortigas Center, Pasig City, to discuss the winding up of the business affairs of the corporation.

When registering your attendance at the aforementioned special stockholders' meeting, please present any valid form of identification, such as company I.D., passport or driver's license.

If you cannot personally attend the meeting and would like to be represented by a Proxy, a written and signed copy of the Proxy must be received by the undersigned not later than April 7, 2006. In case of a corporation, the Proxy must be signed by duly authorized officer.

Pasig City, March 16, 2006.

(Sgd.) **ELENA T. PEREZ**
Acting Corporate Secretary

(PDI - March 20, 27 & Apr. 3, 2006)

Republic of the Philippines
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
SEC Building EDSA, Greenhills
Mandaluyong City
CORPORATION FINANCE DEPARTMENT

Republic of the Philippines
Securities and Exchange Commission
Metro Manila
IN THE MATTER OF THE
REGISTRATION OF SECURITIES
LEXBER INCORPORATED
xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that on October 20, 2003, an amended registration statement was filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission for and on behalf of LEXBER INCORPORATED to cover an additional 1,020 Non-Proprietary Timeshares of Regal Lexber Vacation Homes (the Project) with an offer price enumerated as follows

Number of Shares Offered	Unit Type	Offering Price
500	Bernadette Type 3 Studio Red	P 306,002.00
260	Bernadette Type 3 Studio White	236,204.00
260	Bernadette Type 3 Studio Blue	166,024.00

The total estimated gross proceeds from the offering amount to Two Hundred Fifty Five Million Four Hundred Eleven Thousand Six Hundred Eighty Pesos (P255,411,680.00).

According to the papers presented, the following persons are the officers/directors of the corporation:

NAME	POSITION
Alejandro G. Cruz-Herrera	Chairman and CEO
Bernardita R. Cruz-Herrera	Director & Corp. Secretary
Elpidio Y. Custodio	Director/Asst. Corp. Secretary
Manuel R. Tolome	Director/Assistant Treasurer
Alexis R. Cruz-Herrera	Principal Operating Officer/ Comptroller
Roderick P. Baybayan	Principal Accounting Officer
Anita L. Maculo	Principal Treasury Officer

Said registration statement and other papers/documents attached thereto are open to inspection by interested parties during business hours, and copies thereof, photostatic or otherwise, shall be furnished to every party at such reasonable fees as the Commission may prescribe.

JUSTINA F. CALLANGAN
Director

(PDI – March 23 & 27, 2006)

TransCo
National Transmission Corporation

INVITATION FOR BIDS

Date : March 13, 2006
Loan No. : CALYON
Contract No.: Sp05.MBTBP.MI-0060

1. The ***National Power Corporation (NPC)*** has received a loan from the ***Buyer's Credit Facility arranged by CALYON through a Master Credit Arrangement*** for ***Maramag-Bunawan Project*** and it is intended that part of the proceeds of this loan will be applied to eligible payments under the contract ***Survey, Design, Supply of Materials/Equipment and Erection/Installation and Commissioning of Maramag-Bunawan 230kV Transmission Backbone Project.***

   Bidder shall be from eligible source country of Calyon Buyer's Credit Facility only (United States, Austria, Belgium, England, Denmark, South Korea, Netherlands, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland).
2. The *National Transmission Corporation (TRANSCO)* administering the implementation of the said project, now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the:

Survey, Design, Supply of Materials/Equipment and Erection/Installation and Commissioning of Maramag–Bunawan 230kV Transmission Backbone Project.

3. Bidders may obtain further information from and inspect and acquire the bidding documents of the ***Office of the Manager, Bids and Contracts Management Department,*** *Ground Floor, Power Center, National Transmission Corporation, Quezon Avenue corner BIR Road, Diliman, Quezon City, Metro Manila, Telephone No.: 981-2212, 981-22-13, 981-4652; Telefax No.: 921-23-08*
4. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested eligible bidders starting March 23, 2006 upon submission of a written application to the above office, and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of ***Forty Thousand Pesos (PHP 40,000.00).***
5. A two-envelope bidding procedure will be adopted. Bidders are to submit simultaneously two (2) sealed envelopes, one (1) containing the technical proposal and one (1) containing the price proposal. Initially only the technical proposals will be opened. Technical proposals which are submitted by non-qualified bidders or which are not substantially responsive will be rejected. The substantially responsive technical proposals that have been submitted by qualified bidders are discussed with the bidders and the bidders are requested for full compliance. The bidders may or may not submit a supplementary price proposal, which contain the changes in price resulting from the discussed changes in the technical proposals. The original price proposal and the supplementary price proposal are opened simultaneously in public.
6. All bids must be accompanied by a bid security of:

   Two Hundred Eighteen Thousand One Hundred Forty Seven US Dollars (US$218,147.00)

   The bid security must be included in the technical proposal.

   Pre-bid Conference shall be conducted on April 27, 2006.

   The deadline for the submission of bids will be on June 7, 2006 at 1:30 P.M. at the aforementioned address. Late submission will be rejected.
7. The technical proposals together with the bid security will be opened immediately thereafter in the presence of bidders' representatives who choose to attend.
8. The price proposals will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the time and date and at the address to be advised by the Employer after approval of the evaluation of the technical proposals.
9. The total contract duration for the project is **480 calendar days.**
10. TRANSCO reserves the right to reject any or all Bids without offering any reasons, waive any required formality therein and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the government.
11. All communications shall be addressed to the Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee at aforementioned address.

(Sgd.) **GUILLERMO R. REDOBLADO**
Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI – March 13, 20 & 27, 2006)

AMENDMENT TO THE AMENDED MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

DATED FEBRUARY 14, 2006 DEFINING THE GUIDELINES ON TRANSFERABILITY OF TAX CREDIT CERTIFICATES ISSUED UNDER EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 226, THE OMNIBUS INVESTMENT CODE

Pursuant to Section 9 of the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) dated October 13, 2000 executed by and between the Board of Investments (BOI) and the Department of Finance (DOF) in compliance with the provision of Article 21 of Executive Order No. 226 (E.O. 226) regarding the transferability of tax credit certificates (TCCs) issued under the said E.O., the following additional guidelines are hereby adopted:

"1. *Transfers by companies belonging to a distressed industry sector:*

Transferors belonging to an industry sector which BOI has assessed to be in distress shall be allowed to transfer their outstanding TCCs to any BOI registered transferees *and government financial institutions* without requiring them to comply with the conditions imposed under Section 1c, 1e and 1f of the prevailing MOA, *provided* that this type of transfer shall be allowed for one year only from official notification to the Center by BOI that the industry sector is in distress, without prejudice to renewal thereof upon approval by the Executive Committee."

"2. *Section 9 of the MOA is hereby amended to include the following paragraph:*

"Henceforth, in order to simplify the administrative process in amending the existing MOA, and since BOI and DOF are well represented in the Center's Excom, any amendment to the prevailing MOA including exceptions to the guidelines for meritorious consideration shall now be done through a resolution duly approved by the Center's Executive Committee which resolution shall be for implementation without the need for another MOA between BOI and DOF, subject to compliance with the provisions of EO 226 and with the required administrative procedures under the Administrative Code."

(Sgd.) **PETER B. FAVILA**
Secretary
Department of Trade & Industry

(Sgd.) **MARGARITO B. TEVES**
Secretary
Department of Finance

Signed in the presence of:

(Sgd.) **ELMER C. HERNANDEZ**
Undersecretary
Board of Investments

(Sgd.) **GAUDENCIO A. MENDOZA, JR.**
Undersecretary
DSS-CENTER

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES }
NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION } S.S.
CITY OF MANILA }

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this 09 day of MARCH, 2006 in the City of Manila, affiants exhibited to me their Community Tax Certificates as follows:

NAMES	CTC Number	ISSUED AT	ISSUED ON
MARGARITO B. TEVES	14026438	Manila	8-02-05
PETER B. FAVILA	20564958	Makati	2-24-06

IN WITNESS THEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my notarial seal for the day, year, and place above written.

Doc No. 188
Page No. 39
Book No. XII
Series of 2006

(Sgd.) **ATTY. JOAQUIN M. CHUA**
NOTARY PUBLIC MANILA
COMMISSION EXPIRES–DEC. 31, 2006
P.T.R. NO. 3721696-1-31-06 MLA
ROLL OF ATTORNEY NO. 25202
IBP O.R. NO. 595079-1-25-05

(PDI - March 13, 20 & 27, 2006)

iBlog, iPodcast: Citizen journalism using tech

From page B3-4

semination. This sociological phenomenon is fueling people's need to interact, to be heard and to participate. Consumer advocacy is moving on from the realm of consumer goods and traditional services. It is now increasingly being seen in the advocacy of getting quality information, and since news and opinion directly affect the information consumer, they are participating in the creation of content in what Dan Gillmor calls grassroots or citizen journalism. This phenomenon is not technologically deterministic as Marshall McLuhan's view of a global village appears to be, it is a code-determined social phenomenon. Blogs and podcasts are just some of the technological tools being utilized to achieve this goal of proactive information consumerism, but at the core of this idea is the social need for people to participate and be heard.

Media redefined

This consequently is redefining the word "media" as we know it. The flow no longer comes from a broadcaster's or publisher's point of view down to the audience, where the old communications model of sender-message-receiver is followed. Information flow in this day and age is no longer linear. With the participation of citizens—the audience—as both content consumer and producer, it has become multi-dimensional, spiraling up and around several evolutionary ladders of communications.

A communications model for new media cannot be made based on old models that are one-way. From Aristotle's simplistic Source-Message model (speaker constructs message to bring about effects among listeners) to Wilbur Schramm's 1954 Source-Message-Receiver model, the directional flow of new media message production, receipt, constant revision and acceptance cannot be interpreted using linear thinking.

The author believes process of new media communications indeed spirals across participants, but it is more complex than that. Content spirals across different media, and new media technologies spiral around the needs of the audience, giving rise to blogs, podcasts and other forms of citizen media. At the same time, the three components—content, audience and access—go up their own evolutionary ladders.

Current communications models are too linear and do not apply to today's complex new media process, where the traditional media and content provider should now be seen as separate entities. On the other end are new technologies that are becoming legitimate media devices or media outlets, such as cellular phones and the Internet. In between these two are the most important players of all—the individual audience and the community of individual audiences. The author argues that this component of the new media communications process actually shapes content and the new media through which content is delivered.

Three components

The author believes there are three participants in the new media communications process, and these three are all going up their own evolutionary ladders. In between, comments and feedback are spiraling up the ladder at different rates. The author calls this the "spiral-ladder model" of the new media communications process, and we are seeing the birth of it with the advent of grassroots journalism.

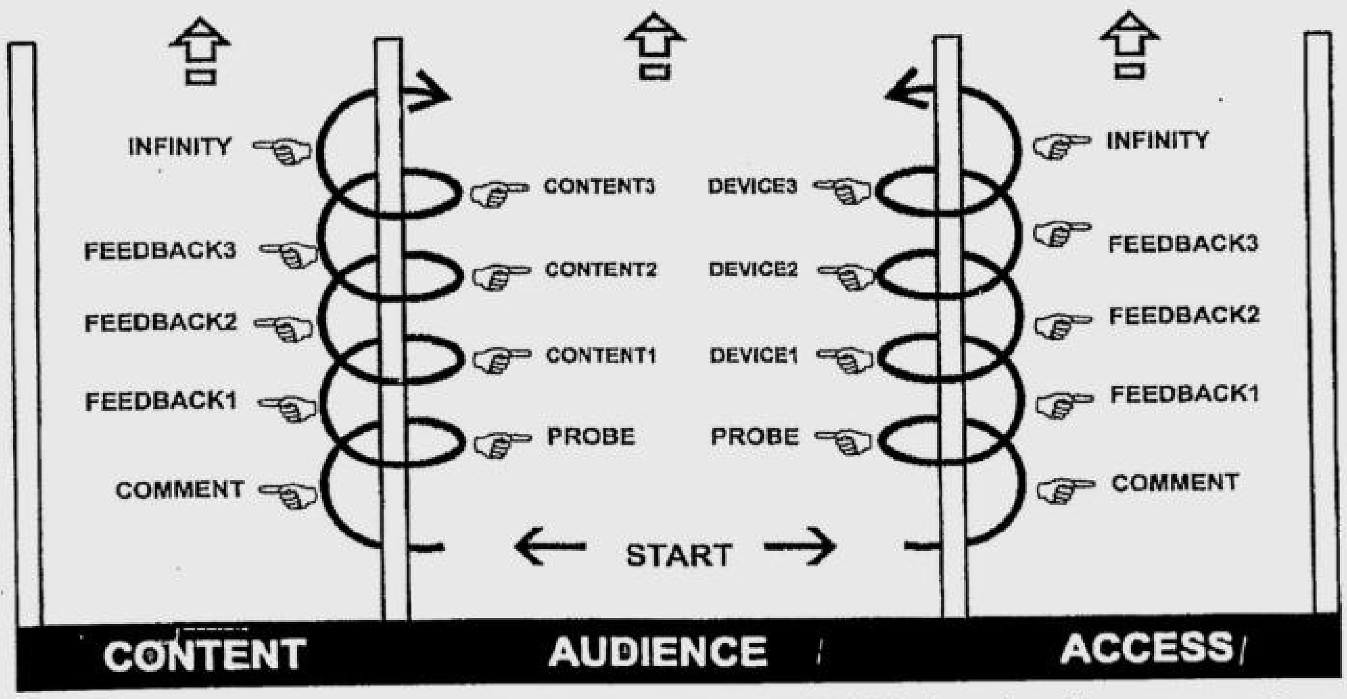
At the heart of the process is the individual citizen or audience—a reader, listener or viewer who is discriminating and vocal about what he or she wants from media and government; one who demands changes from media and who prefers to personalize the information he or she gets and produces. On a bigger scale, the community of individual audiences or the grassroots in general is the force that determines the creation and marketing of future media products and access devices such as consumer electronic gadgets on the physical side and blogs and podcasts on the software or virtual side. So the audience in this case is generally placed under one classification although there should be an operational distinction between individual audiences (personalization) and the group of individual audiences (grassroots community).

The second is a combination of traditional media and new media content providers which from hereon we shall refer to collectively as "content providers." Traditional media like newspapers, radio and television are increasingly listening to the audience and the grassroots, asking them through surveys what shows they want to watch and what stories they want to read more. As a result, entire TV and radio programming content and newspaper sections are being overhauled. Or, entirely new products are being created to cater to the demands of the audience. Traditional media are also embracing the Internet to make their services interactive to get instant audience feedback which they cannot otherwise get through one-way newspapers or TV broadcasts. Similarly, content providers such as independent producers, cellular phone content developers and Internet content providers are gauging the market to see what kinds of new media products they can offer.

The third participant is a combination of new media device and access providers such as makers of home communications systems, digital television, cellular phone makers, cellular phone operators, portable media centers, blogging software, podcasting equipment and other such devices which do not fall into any of the traditional classifications of media but are nonetheless being used as new media devices. We shall refer to this group of participants from hereon as "access providers."

It should be noted that the author specifically divided the traditional definition of "media" in two: media content providers and media access providers. This is because of two things. First, there are many new media components that simply won't fit into our traditional definition of "medium" or "media." Second, it was only recently that the Internet and wireless cellular networks were suggested as being considered legitimate mass communications media. Today they are called new media but they are mass media nonetheless, what with a billion people on the Internet today and with TV potentially being broadcast to 2 billion cellular phones by 2010 and other similar services.

Shades of the communications process the author will describe in the next few paragraphs and in the chart above are already happening today, and he believes this shall become more evident in the years to come.



SPIRAL-LADDER MODEL OF NEW MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS PROCESS. The author believes there are three components to the process of new media communications: the audience (made up of individual citizens and the grassroots community of citizens), the media content providers and the media access providers. Note the separation between content and access providers in the new media age instead of lumping them collectively as "media" in the old definition of the word. This model relies heavily on feedback and content from the audience such as those they create in their blogs, podcasts, mailing lists, phoned-in comments and man-on-the-street interviews. The process is actually initiated by the grassroots, not by media. Content, audience and access move up their own evolutionary ladders at their own pace. The lack of synchronicity in the evolutionary process explains why content provision, access provision and the demands of the audience are not always in tune with one another. At the same time, feedback and the introduction of new content or new media devices spiral across the three participants. Content also spirals across different new media devices and traditional media, from newspapers to blogs to TV, etc.

The warning bells are ringing. State and commerce are censoring new media content providers.. Governments are harassing and even incarcerating bloggers and podcasters. The mainstream media are closely watching citizen journalists. The flow of information is reversing from top-down to bottom-up.

This is an exciting time to be in the media and communications industry for we are seeing the birth of an integrated media process which takes into consideration audience feedback as part of the content. That movement is being spearheaded by bloggers, podcasters and citizen journalists who are fighting back using inexpensive communications technologies to make their own content and their own media.

We are seeing corporate entities and states go from denial, anger and bargaining over the coming of a new media order. In the next two generations we might see a media run not only by traditional news networks but a network of critically thinking citizens as well. That would, in the future, be an era when grassroots journalism no longer exists because people like the progenies of Jeff Ooi of Malaysia, Yan Sham-Shackleton of Hong Kong and Lee Johnson of Singapore are no longer cyber-dissidents. With attention to journalistic requirements like accuracy, objectivity and accountability, they could in the future become regular, albeit informal, contributors to our daily intake of news and information from a redefined, new and improved media industry.

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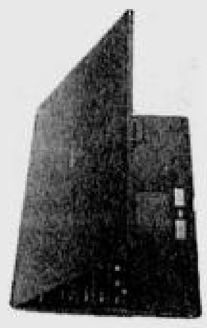

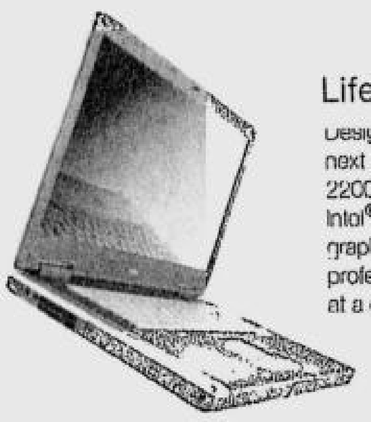

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centrino
MOBILE TECHNOLOGY

iBlog, iPodcast: Citizen journalism using tech

By Leo Magno

(Conclusion)

SPECIAL REPORT

FUTURE MEDIA ANALYST ANDREW Zolli gave a concrete example of how citizen journalists using technology could assist mainstream news reportage:

"(New media's) influence might make the system of reporting better," he said. "Journalists cover many things. They expose corruption. They cover war. They cover local events. This requires many different types of journalists. You need to find a better fit, a better journalist who's right for the job at hand. If you have someone out there, a blogger who's an expert on that subject matter and who so happens to be in that particular location, he or she might give a better report than the newspaper journalist because you can't expect their network of reporters to cover so much ground around the world."

Although new media is primarily based on technology, the rise of blogs and podcasts and other online communities is a social phenomenon that is not technologically determined.

"You have to understand that this is a code-determined social phenomenon," Zolli said. "Technology only in part allows these quasi-journalists to do what they do. There is an unbelievable expressive participatory passion out there on the Internet. What's scary is there might be more people in your audience who know more about every sentence you write. If a journalist's role is to get to the truth, having these people is good. But having professional journalists at the core of the system is good too."

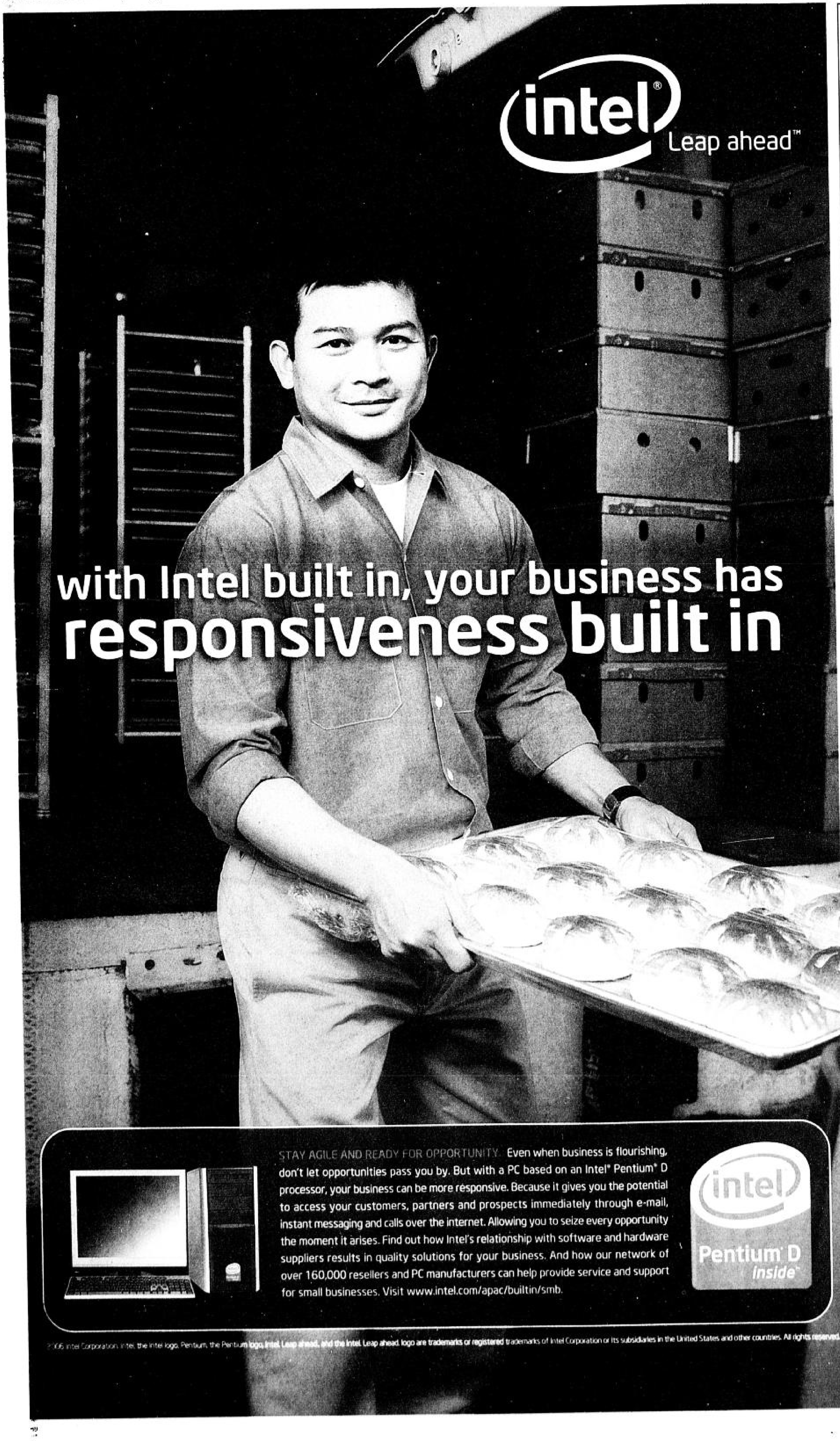
And so we see a possible future where grassroots journalism will meet halfway with traditional media. What does this mean for media in general? How are blogs, podcasts and other new media devices changing the information flow from top-to-bottom to bottom-up? How are old, linear theories on communications being changed forever by grassroots journalists and individual citizen content producers?

Content creators

We have heard from media practitioners, new media content producers like bloggers and podcasters, technology industry pundits and experts in the field of journalism. We have seen the harassment experienced by bloggers in Malaysia, Hong Kong and Singapore, and the protection and recognition given them by journalists' associations. We have seen the reactions of government and corporate entities toward these citizen journalists. We have seen how mainstream media are reacting to grassroots journalism. All these point to an undeniable fact: Some members of the audience, the information consumers, are becoming proactive rather than just passively viewing or reading a particular medium and accepting what they read and hear as gospel truth. The audience is participating in content creation.

As the audience continues to become content creators, they are getting the attention of the state and mainstream media, the old guards of information dis-

iBLOG/ B3-3



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Conquering Technology Angst

The top 5 things small and medium-sized businesses should consider when hiring an IT consultant

We all know that most small and medium sized businesses (SMBs) cannot afford a seasoned IT department. Even among those who have tech in-house, few have the resources to handle the complexity of today's technology. On the other hand, IT systems' malfunctioning can mean loss of business or dissatisfied customers.

Consequently, it is important to have your computer running properly to facilitate your staff's productivity and keep customers satisfied. It is crucial to your success to have a proficient computer system serviced by an IT consultant to protect your business. Finding the right IT consultant can help you prevent the failure of your computer system which is usually linked to loss of business, advise you on the latest technology and, in a long run, help you work more cost effectively and productively.

You want to offer your clients the best service - because you know that if you do not, your competitors will. IT can equip you with the competitive edge over your competitors but technology is something that is way beyond SMB owners' knowledge capacity.

Nobody expects you to know how to handle complicated IT problems and you should do what you can do best. You don't have to know what is wrong with your computer system, but have to have somebody who does to fix it.

1. Where should I look for an IT consultant?

The best approach is to use referrals from other successful small businesses in your business network, business partners, the location you purchased your PCs, or to contact a small business association for recommendations and assistance. References are a great way to ensure that the IT consultant is capable to deal with your IT system and free up your time for your core business activities.

2. Set clear expectations for your IT consultant

You can start by mapping out your requirement for the IT systems with your PCs' setup. If you do not own a PC, you should make sure your IT consultant takes into account the anticipated growth of computing needs and invest into one with additional computing power.

Commonly-used applications such as Internet phone, video conferencing, file downloads from the Internet usually run simultaneously and can quickly bog down computer performance, absorbing most or all available computing power and reducing an employee's PC to an agonizingly slow manner of getting things done. A sufficiently powerful, balanced system allows multitasking employees to perform more efficiently and effectively. For example, PCs equipped with the latest technologies such as the Intel® Pentium® D processor enables improved computing performance.

If you already have a number of PCs in your office, ask yourself if you need a network to connect them all for easier information sharing. You also need to update your software to protect your business' operational and information assets.

Once you've figured out your company's needs, you need to list your expectations of your ideal IT consultant. There are certain elements that cannot be disregarded when you compile your expectation checklist:

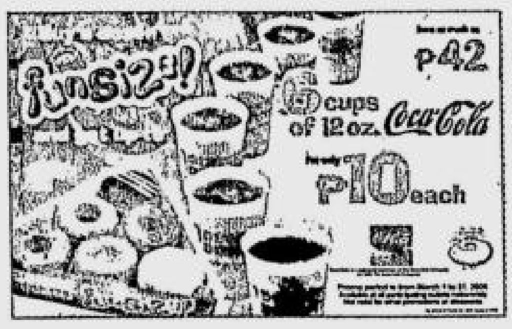
- The IT solutions recommended for your company should be scalable to ensure you can easily update your system as needed in the next couple of years without having to invest heavily in new systems.
- They should be reliable in uptime and facilitate security management.
- The solution should be an industry standard, one that is compatible with your old solution, in order to allow you to access past data and information. SMBs can benefit tremendously from spending less money for better computer systems based on Intel Architecture.
- Finally, the system should include a regular back-up system or process to keep your company's data safe and sound.

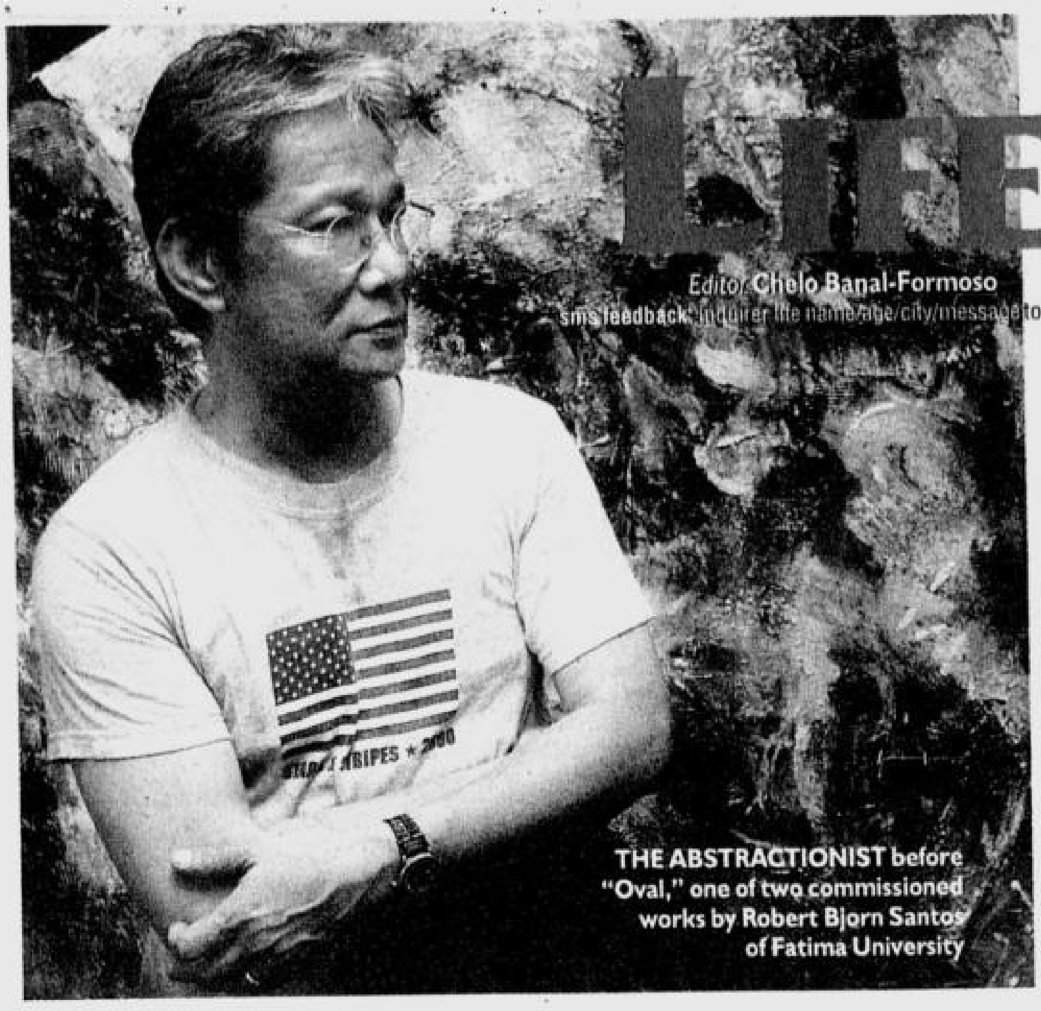
Technology is imperative in today's business environment. A thoughtfully selected IT consultant matching your business needs can provide you with a well-maintained, up-to-date computer system help improve customer service and responsiveness, protect valuable information, improve employee productivity and ultimately, help your business run more efficiently.

ADVT

LIFESTYLE

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso
Subsection Editor Lito B. Zulueta
sms feedback: inquirer life name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 386 (Smart) or email us at pr_lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph


funsize! P42 5 cups of 12 oz. Coca-Cola for only P10 each


THE ABSTRACTIONIST before "Oval," one of two commissioned works by Robert Bjorn Santos of Fatima University

Larger than life, Wilwayco-style

By Lito B. Zulueta
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan

The artist gives a sneak preview of his new works, abstract murals in oval canvas

EDWIN WILWAYCO'S UNSTINTING abstraction has avoided repetitiveness and predictability by two avenues: depth and breadth. The former shows the artist's evolving maturity and dynamically deepening sensibility. The latter evinces his artistic intrepidity through tireless exploration of mediums, shapes and forms.

The artistic voyaging is apparent in Wilwayco's experiments with shaped screens and relief paintings (the "Birds of Paradise" and "Blues" series, for example). By making wood panels contoured into graceful outlines as his canvas, and hinging them together so that they stand tall and wide in a three-dimensional setting, Wilwayco achieves a unique complementarity between matter and form, between idea and image, which is otherwise lost or rutted in the predictable square canvas.

Those experiments indicated that Wilwayco had been reaching out for breadth and scale, as he continues to do today. They somehow prefigured his current achievement: mu-

LARGER/ C5

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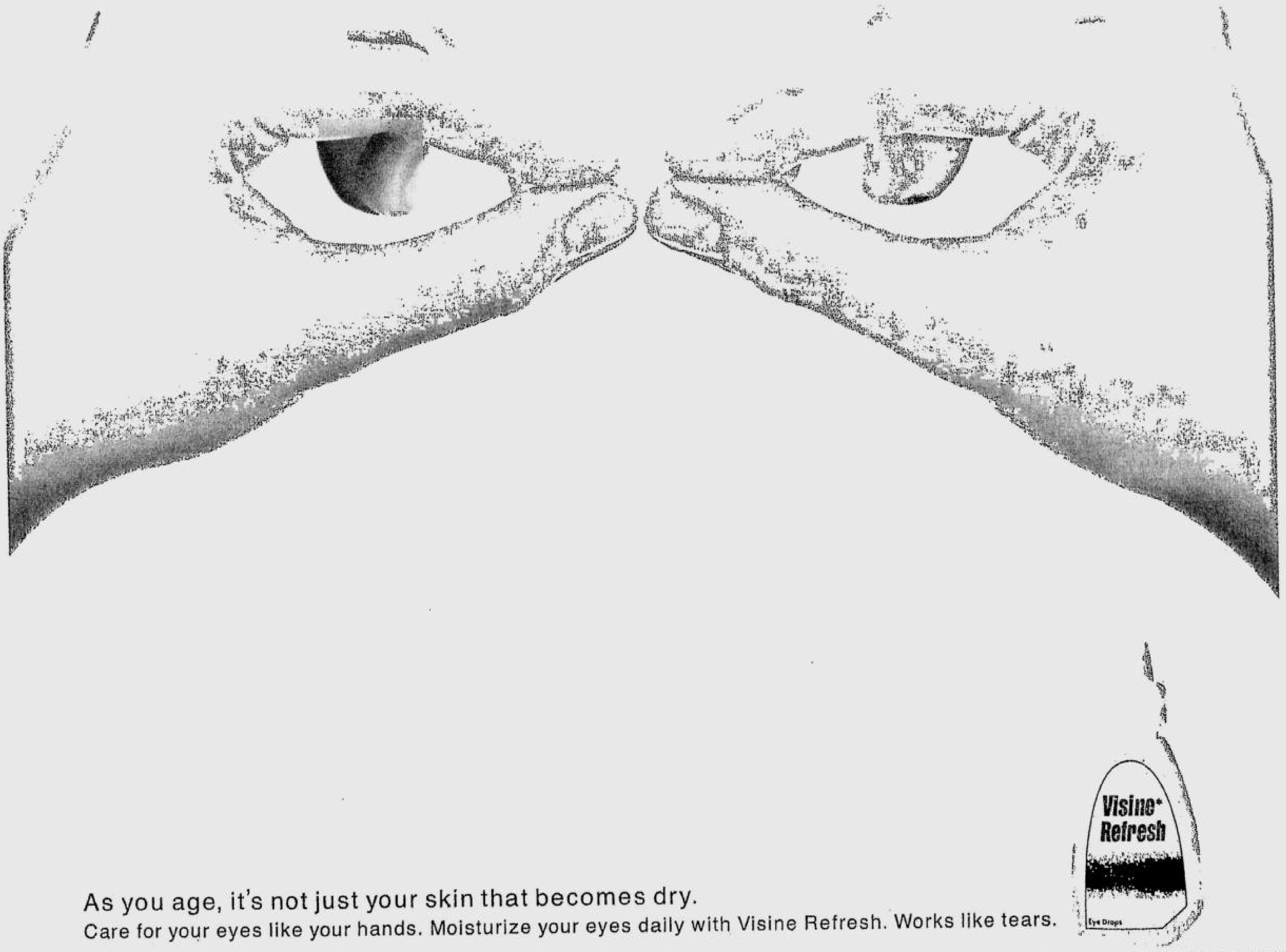
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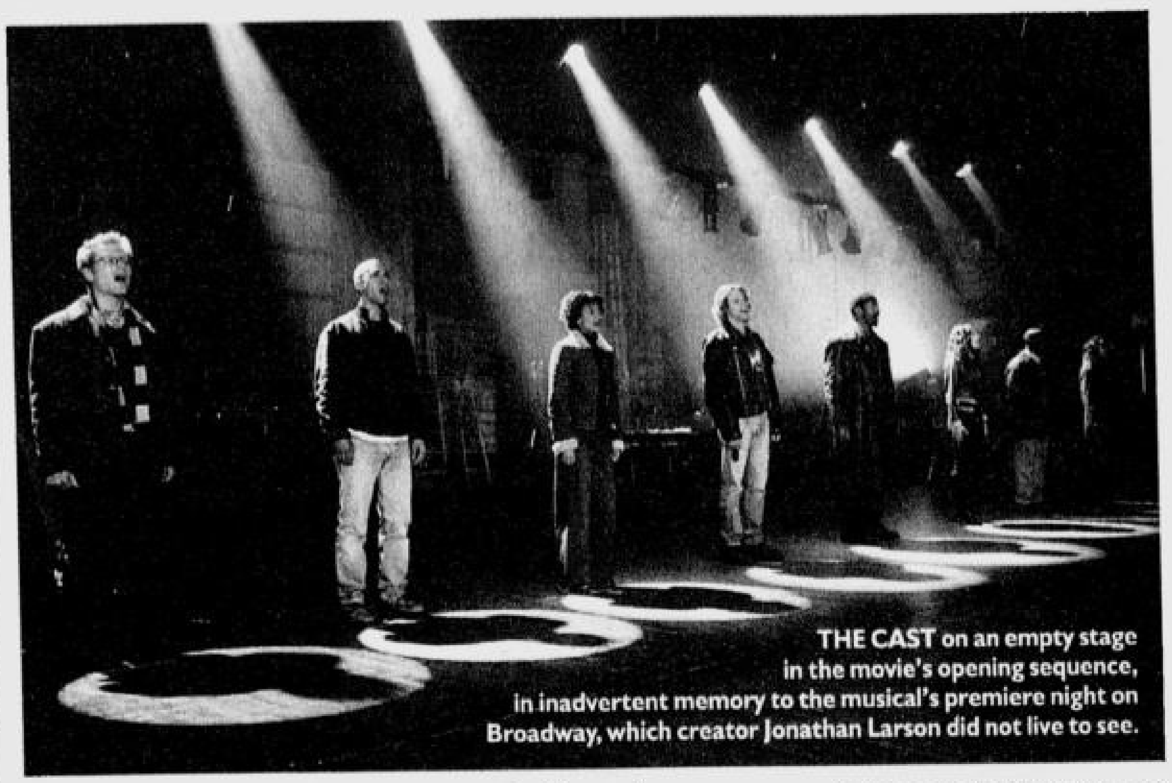
FROM STAGE TO FILM

‘Rent’ gets a new lease on life

By Eldric Paul Peredo



THE CAST on an empty stage in the movie's opening sequence, in inadvertent memory to the musical's premiere night on Broadway, which creator Jonathan Larson did not live to see.

ADAM Pascal and Rosario Dawson in "Rent"

IT'S A STORY YOUNG, POST-college adults should be able to identify with: friends living in rented apartments, trying to eke out a living in the fiercely competitive fields of art, film and music, while struggling to pay the apartment lease.

But in "Rent" (Sony Pictures, 2005), that's only the launch pad and pivot point of the characters' more complex problems.

Friends Mark, an amateur filmmaker, and Roger, a frustrated singer/songwriter, live in an unkempt unit in a dilapidated New York apartment, where they burn things in an oil drum to keep warm.

Their erstwhile friend Benny is now their landlord, having married the building-owner's daughter, and he drops by to collect the rent. Either that or a promise to help stop Mark's ex, Maureen, from staging a protest action against an eviction of tenants in another lot Benny owns.

Meanwhile, their friend Collins is mugged on his way to the apartment. He is taken care of by street drummer Angel, who becomes his lover.

And then there are the background issues. Roger has AIDS and shies away from the advances of exotic dancer/drug addict Mimi, their downstairs neighbor; he is not frustrated for nothing—he is still reeling from his girlfriend's suicide after the latter learns she had been infected.

Mark, still love struck by Maureen, has to deal with the fact that she left him for Harvard Law graduate Joanne. Collins and Mimi are HIV-positive, too, with Angel having the most advanced case of the lot.

That makes for a very gloomy, convoluted—and, in this society, scandalous—plot, if this writer may say so. Or not.

Broadway hit

"Rent," by Jonathan Larson, first hit Broadway in 1996. Its modern setting and bold storyline as brought to life by its ragtag band of characters and production set enabled Larson to win the Pulitzer Prize for Drama that year, four Tony awards, as well as honors from the Obie Awards and the New York Drama Critics Circle.

It all started as a playful proposal in 1988 from satirist/playwright Billy Aronson (known for his quirky plays such as a bastardized version of "Little Red Riding Hood," as well as TV cartoons "Courage the Cowardly Dog" and MTV's "Beavis and Butthead") to update the Puccini opera "La Boheme" (about Bohemians Marcello, Rodolfo, Mimi, Colline, Schaunard, and friends dealing with Parisian life and tuberculosis).

It was Larson who would ultimately take the cudgels for the newborn concept.

Unfortunately the play's writer and composer, who had fought to keep production running despite major revisions and financing difficulties, died of a freak aortic aneurysm before the premiere night.

Larson's story became the ultimate paragon of the play, as well as the catharsis for its undeniable success. His was a true *la vie Boheme*, having been a virtual unknown in the field of musical composition, much less musical theater, before struggling to bring "Rent" into fruition for seven years.

His death ensured the project's continuance as the actors felt they had to do something for his memory. Idina Menzel, who originated Maureen on Broadway and reprises her role in the film, would say that Larson's death became the bond between the actors.

Added Jesse L. Martin, who also comes back as Collins, "We lost [Jonathan] at the beginning of the performance process. But everybody rallied together and decided that we were going to make sure this story remained vibrant and important and energetic."

And the rest became history.

"Rent" has since become the seventh longest-running on Broadway. The cast album became one of the most successful recordings of an American musical in decades, featuring the theme song, "Seasons of Love," and other remarkable songs such as "One Song Glory," "Another Day," and "I'll Cover You." The slogan "No Day But Today" became the new formulation of carpe diem.

Unprecedented

Instead of getting Hollywood actors for the film version, director Chris Columbus ("Mrs. Doubtfire," "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone," "The Chamber of Secrets") made an unprecedented stage-to-film move by getting the original stage actors to reprise their parts. He thought they were irreplaceable.

Thus, with the exception of newcomers Rosario Dawson (Mimi) and Tracie Thoms (Joanne), Anthony Rapp (Mark), Adam Pascal (Roger), Taye Diggs (Benny), Wilson Jermaine Heredia (a Tony winner for his portrayal of Angel), Menzel and Martin have all come back for the movie.

The result, off a script by Stephen Chbosky, has a stage feel, from the actors' expressions to the dances sequences, on a full-blown movie set. Definitely not for viewers with a dislike of plays and musicals. But if you do not mind that and focus on the story, you have a pretty passable watch.

The songs are vibrant, with memorable lyrics, and at times can tug at a few heartstrings. They give way to dialogue, though.

Photography director Stephen Goldblatt is responsible for the downtown New York look, with shots on actual streets and locations from Oakland to Manhattan. Assisting with the music was Tim Weil, original music director, co-arranger, and current music supervisor of the Broadway and touring productions.

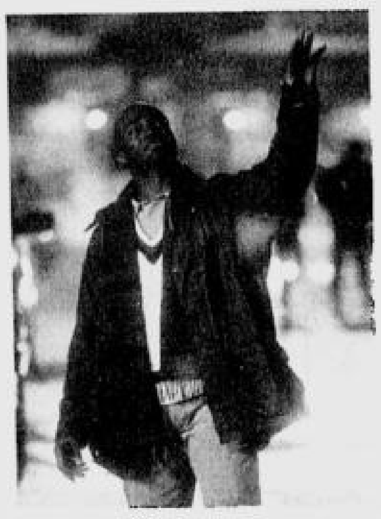
Keith Young, whose recent work includes Columbia's "Something's Gotta Give" starring Jack Nicholson and Diane Keaton, and "What Women Want" starring Mel Gibson, did the choreography.

Perhaps most important, the film retains the musical's revolutionary and bold treatment of the Bohemian life in light of the then still unexplored issues of homosexuality and the AIDS epidemic.

For all the years that "Rent" has been running, and for years after, now that it will be available on film, it has reminded and will remind of choices that have to be made as people go on with day-to-day affairs.

It will remind people that even wrong choices can be made a little more livable with a spoonful of sugar. No permanent cure, but, at least, a new lease.

"Rent" the movie will play in Ayala theaters starting March 29.



TAYE Diggs

MARK (Anthony Rapp) tells Joanne (Tracie Thoms) all there is to know about Maureen in "Tango Maureen."

HOW HAS A BOOK CHANGED MY LIFE?

A book that brings out lessons of life

By Alexander A. Orlino

WRITTEN IN 1978, "THE Road Less Traveled" by Morgan Scott Peck made me see things and life in general in a different perspective.

Reading it made me undergo a massive psychological surgery. It has become a sort of meditation book for me. The book details the discipline of life and parenting and provides a genuine definition of love that most people know but often overlook.

The book made me see the reality and actuality of God with precision and clarity. I can safely summarize it as a book that provides a strategy in living life. It really reinforces the power of reading and reclaims the true meaning of the word "education." For education means to bring forth, and the book helps in unlocking and bringing out what's already in the minds of the reader all along for so long.

In celebration of the Philippine Daily Inquirer's 20th anniversary, get a chance to win P3,000 PowerBooks gift certificates and be featured in the INQUIRER*'s pages by writing about the power of reading. For contest mechanics, log on to www.powerbooks.com.ph*

Iligan workshop now accepting applications

THE NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR Culture and Arts and the Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology's Office of the vice chancellor for Research and Extension are accepting applications for writing fellowships to the 13th Iligan National Writers Workshop (INWW) to be held on May 22-24, in Iligan City.

Panelists this year are Rosario Cruz Lucero, Erlinda Kintanar Alburo, Jaime An Lim, Leoncio P. Deriada, Merlie M. Alunan, German V. Gervacio, Steven Patrick C. Fernandez and this year's keynote speaker, the poet Michael U. Obenieta, 3rd INWW Fellow (1996)

Fifteen slots, five each from Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, are available for fellowships.

Applicants are required to submit five poems, or one short story, or a one-act play in Filipino, English or in Cebuano, Hiligaynon, Kinaray-a, Waray (with translations) along with the applicant's biodata, two 2" x 2" photos and a certification that his/her work is original. For short stories or plays, submit a hard copy and a 3.5 diskette with the manuscripts encoded in MS Word 7.0. Unpublished works are preferred.

Writing fellows will be given free board and lodging, honoraria and travel allowance. Applications must be postmarked on or before March 30. No applications or manuscripts will be accepted if sent by fax or e-mail. Applicants are also advised to keep copies of their manuscripts since these will not be returned.

Send all applications to the 13th INWW director Christine Godinez-Ortega c/o OVCRE, MSU-IIT, Iligan City. Call (063) 3516131, or e-mai ovcre-mepc@sulat.msuiit.edu.ph

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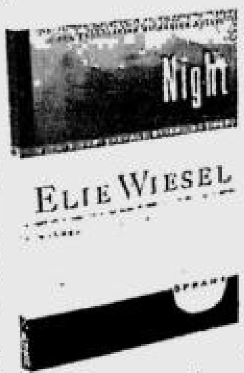
Elie Wiesel's ‘Night’ returns

HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR ELIE WIESEL provides a candid, horrific and deeply poignant account of his survival as a teenager in the Nazi death camps in "Night," PowerBooks Specialty Store's book of the month for March.



A new translation of the book by Marion Wiesel, Elie's wife and frequent translator, presents this influential memoir in the language and spirit truest to the author's original intent. Also, in a substantive new preface, Elie reflects on the enduring importance of "Night" and his lifelong, passionate dedication to ensuring that the world never forgets man's capacity for inhumanity to man.

"Night" offers much more than a litany of the daily terrors, everyday perversions and rampant sadism at Auschwitz and Buchenwald; it also eloquently addresses many of the philosophical as well as personal questions implicit in any serious consideration of what the Holocaust was, what it meant, and what its legacy is and will be, questions that have haunted the world since Hitler's rise. How could such a staggering number of innocents have lost their lives at the command of one regime? What does it take to survive when body, mind, and spirit are brutalized for months, even years? Why does God seem to forsake those who suffer?

Focus on Updike

American fictionist John Updike is PowerBooks featured award winner this March. His most popular works are his Rabbit series ("Rabbit, Run," "Rabbit Redux," "Rabbit is Rich," "Rabbit at Rest," and "Rabbit, Remembered"); it is about Harry "Rabbit" Angstrom, a former basketball superstar, who struggles through marriage and life. "Rabbit is Rich" and "Rabbit at Rest" won Pulitzer Prizes.

Born in Reading, Pennsylvania, Updike is famous for his craftsmanship and prolific writing.

His works often explore sex, faith, death, and their interrelationship. He favors realism in his writing: For instance, the opening of "Rabbit, Run" spans several pages describing a pickup basketball game in intricate detail. Most of his novels follow this style and generally feature everyday people in middle America.

PowerBooks is at Greenbelt 4 (7576428 to 29), Megamall (6352898 to 99), Alabang Town Center (8505662 to 63), Glorietta (7527075), Shangri-La (6380023/25) and Robinsons Place Ermita (5233334/5243448).

Summer workshops at Gantimpala

WORKSHOP participants on stage

GANTIMPALA THEATER FOUNDATION (GTF) is holding its Summer Theater Workshop.

Valerie Roxas, Joel Molina and Michael King Urieta, who are now part of the GTF's Actors Company, were graduates of the workshop.

Valerie Roxas, a product of the 2003 workshop, has had supporting and lead roles in the company's four classics, in the GTF-TheatreNow production of "Ang Tahanan Ni Bernarda Alba" and was last seen in "The Queen's Jewel" as Mira-Nila. She has appeared in commercials, an animé franchise and several MTVs since her stint with the company.

Michael King Urieta, from last year's workshop, was part of "Florante at Laura" this season. He was also in the CCP Virgin Lab Fest's "Sister-Out-Law," where his performance was described as "the saving grace of the production." He has directed a passion play for the Valenzuela Community Theater.

From the 2004 workshop came Joel Molina, who has chalked up performances in "Florante at Laura," as Basilio in "El Filibusterismo," and as Philip Latak/Lakan in "The God Stealer/The Queen's Jewel," as well as commercials and a current role in an afternoon TV soap opera.

If you want to be like these very promising theater artists, join the GTF Teens and Adults Summer Musical Theater Workshops, open to male and female acting enthusiasts ages 15 to 30 years old. Classes start April 17 , at the Rehearsal Hall of Concert at the Park Open-Air Auditorium in Luneta Park. Enrollment starts April 3. Tuition fee is P5,000 (inclusive of recital fee).

Call 5280603 or 5365860.

A SCENE from last summer's "Dalagang Bukid"

BROTHERS Carlo and Paolo Sibal at the Picture Books Corner with Dennis Gonzalez, NBDB chair

LAWYER José Sison, Justice José Feria, Ms Sison and Bing Sibal-Limjoco

Centralbooks opens new store

THE 65-YEAR-OLD CENTRALBOOKS, THE country's oldest legal publisher, opened its eighth branch at the 2/F, Glorietta 3 (in front of Goodwill) at the Ayala Center in Makati City.

Welcoming the guests were José Agaton R. Sibal, José Paolo and Juan Carlos, Centralbooks' publishers.

Fr. Boogie Tactoro Jr., SSP, opened the launch ceremonies with a Mass.

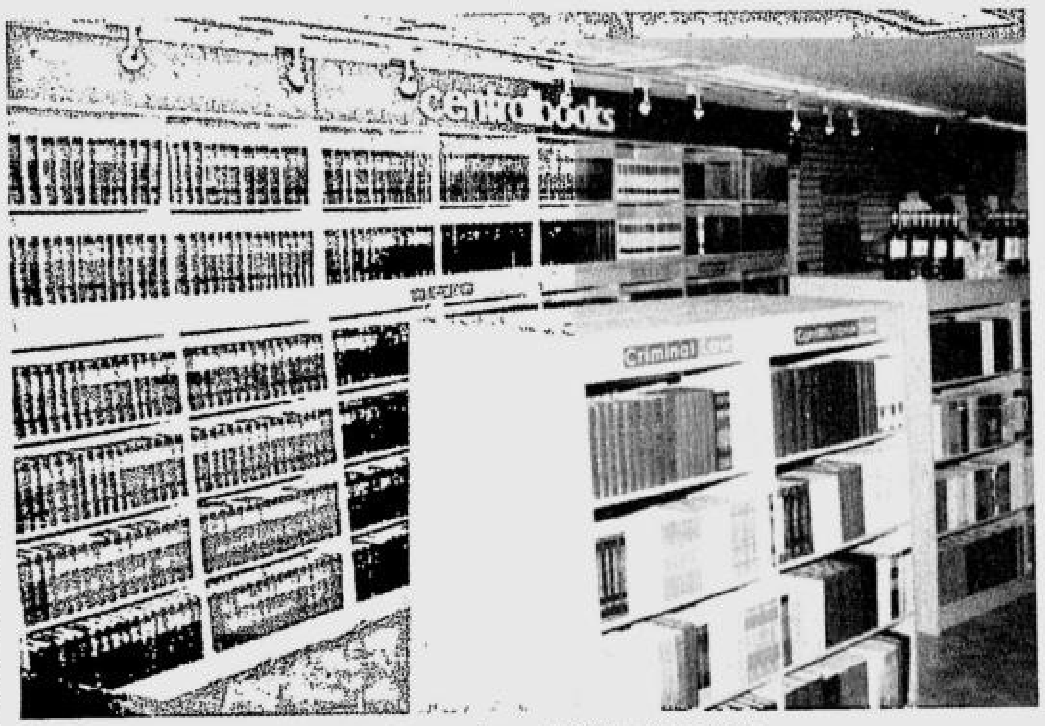
Department of Trade and Industry Undersecretary Elmer Hernandez and National Books Development Board chair Dennis Gonzalez led the ribbon-cutting ceremonies. They were assisted by Bing Sibal-Limjoco, Phoenix Publishing vice president, and Penny Sibal-Balbin, Phoenix Publishing executive vice-president.

Agaton Sibal, in his welcome remarks, said Centralbooks is the first bookstore in the country to be digitally equipped, offering the latest innovations in book publishing.

He was referring to Publish on Demand and Picture Books, which makes possible the easy printing of digital files and manuscripts to a complete, professional perfect-bound book in a matter of minutes regardless of copies; as well as Picture Books, which prints into book form digital photos from CDs, memory card or even from Bluetooth-enabled cell-phone camera.

Attending the affair were legal luminaries and authors such as Justice José Y. Feria and lawyers José Sison, Errol Zhornack, Michael Anthony Clemente, Adrian M. Hernandez, and Francisco Tantuico Jr.

Other guests included architects Andrew de los Alas and Aristotle Tan, Ricky Muñoz, Armi Liu-Dilao and Arnold Ablaza of Fuji Xerox; and lawyer Anthony Bengzon of Bengzon Negre Untalan; Camille and Tony Yap; Gabby Oreta, Joby Oreta and Mikie Bonoan.



LAW books corner

FUJI Xerox group of Ricky Muñoz, Armi Liu-Dilao and Arnold Ablaza

New edition of 'Lola Basyang' stories

FANS OF LOLA BASYANG stories need not wait much longer. Tahanan Books will launch the first volume of "Mga Kuwento ni Lola Basyang" by Severino Reyes today, 5-7 p.m., at Jaymi's Grill, Par 43 at Fort Bonifacio. The public is invited.

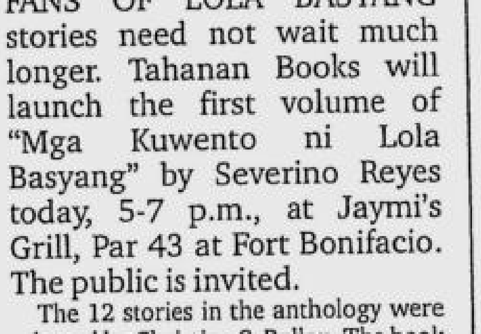
The 12 stories in the anthology were selected by Christine S. Bellen. The book contains an introduction by Bienvenido Lumbera and is handsomely illustrated by award-winning illustrator Felix Mago Miguel.

Avid "Basyang" fans may once again bask in the riveting adventures spun by a tiny bespectacled old lady now fondly known by several generations as simply "Lola Basyang." In this book you will find scorned mermaids, talking skeletons, princes cursed and transformed and other unforgettable characters inhabiting stories of adventure, humor and romance.

Severino Reyes first published the much-beloved "Lola Basyang" stories in Liwayway Magazine in 1925. Using elements from both eastern and western tales, Reyes has retold and adapted close to 500 stories for Filipino readers. The author died in 1942.

Distributed by Tahahan Books and published with permission from the Severino Reyes (Lola Basyang) Publishing Corporation, "Mga Kuwento ni Lola Basyang" is available at National Book Store, PowerBooks and Fully Booked at a cover price of P250.

Call 8182482 or e-mail marketing@tahananbooks.com



SUBIC EARTH DAY FESTIVAL

Theme: EARTH, WIND, WATER & FIRE
COLORS OF SUBIC Photo Contest

Mechanics:

- Open to all amateur and professional photographers.
- Participants must register at the SBMA Ecology Center, Bldg. 157 Bonifacio Drive, Subic Bay Freeport Zone (Tel. No. 047-252-4435 / 4656) for special ID cards/access passes that may be required when taking photographs in private establishments.
- All photographs entered in the contest must be taken within the established boundaries of the Subic Bay Freeport Zone.
- All photo entries must have been taken within the period March 27, 2006 – April 26, 2006.
- Entries must be in 8"x10" full color prints, taken with either digital or conventional camera.
- Participants can submit multiple entries in any or all of the following categories:

[a] Wacky, wild & wonderful	- People and eco-tourism
[b] Feisty, feral & fabulous	- Flora and fauna
[c] Deep, daring & diverse	- Marine environment
[d] Nice, neat & natural	- Industry and nature

- Entries must be original, must not be digitally enhanced, must not be entered in any other photo contest. Each entry must be accompanied by a filled out Entry Form provided below.
- All entries must be submitted to the SBMA Ecology Center not later than 5:00 pm of April 26, 2006.
- All entries will form part of the "Colors of Subic" Photo Exhibit on April 28 – May 1 at the Admiral's Guesthouse, SBFZ
- All entries will be considered property of the contest organizer.
- Judging of entries will be on May 1, 2006. The judges' decision will be final.
- Entries can win in any or all of the categories entered. Prizes for each category will be:

First prize	- P20,000 cash + trophy + Gift certificates
Second prize	- P15,000 cash + trophy + Gift certificates
Third prize	- P10,000 cash + trophy + Gift certificates

- Awarding of prizes will be on May 1, 2006, 6:00 p.m., at the Boardwalk Park, SBFZ.

Colors of Subic Photo Contest 2006
ENTRY FORM

Name ____________________ Signature ____________
Age ______ Address ______________________________
Tel. No. ____________ E-mail address ______________
Title of photo (optional) __________________________
Category (Please check one):
☐ Wild, wacky and wonderful ☐ Feisty, feral and fabulous
☐ Deep, daring and diverse ☐ Nice, neat and natural
Date / place photo was taken: ______________________
Date / time received ______________________________

For more than one entries, this entry form may be photocopied

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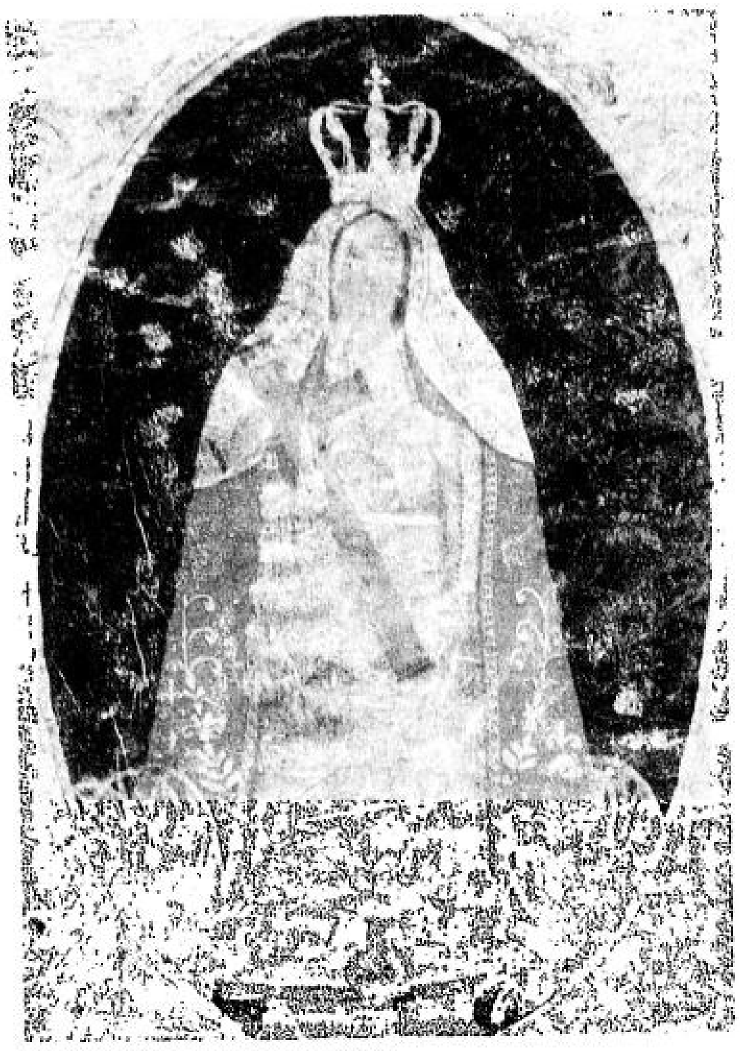
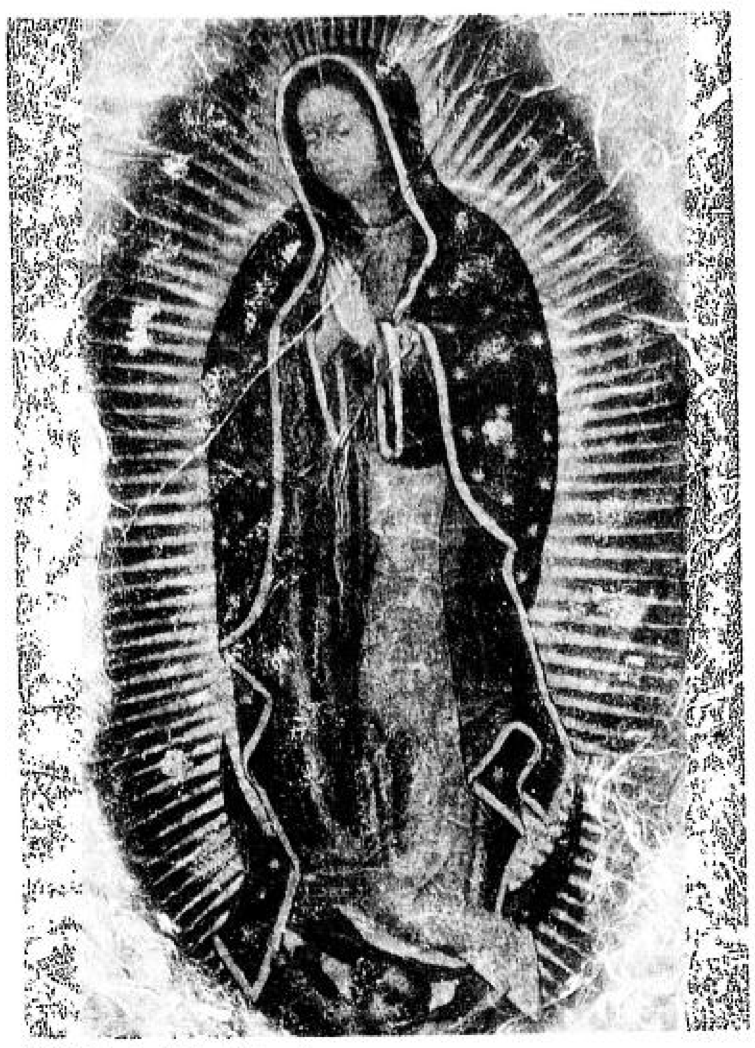
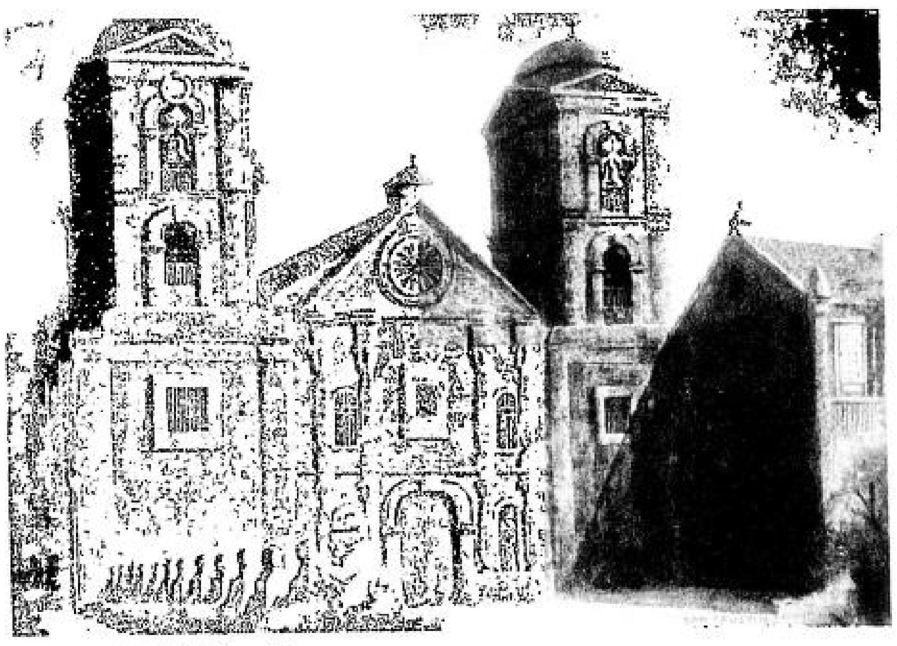


"ST. HELENA My Favorite Santa"



"OUR Lady of Guadalupe"

Al Perez's sturdy art



"SAN AGUSTIN Church"

THE UNFADING GLORY OF THE COUNTRY'S ancient Roman Catholic churches is the palette and identity of Al Perez. The art looks quaint and romantic, no doubt because the subject is inherently quaint and romantic, but also because it is suffused with the artist's devotional spirit, something that harks back from deep inside the collective faith across the centuries.

Not that Perez does not render his old art into something new. For a recorder of stone churches sturdy with age, he does not remain at the snapshot level; his is an impressionist art that reveals the mood of the moment while endowing the subject with the respect and patina of history. The churches' massive façades and intricate brickwork seem to throb from the canvas. His art is an approximation of the biblical injunctions: "the stones themselves will cry out." It is a sturdy art of the centuries. It is an art of faith.

Al Perez's "Semana Santa: Old Churches and Saints" will open on March 31, 6 p.m. at the Purple Art Gallery, SM Megamall. The show runs until April 25.

Marian piety and artistic bonding

By Gino Dormiendo
Contributor

NOLI PRINCIPE MANALANG WON THE "Kulay sa Tubig" annual contest for three consecutive years. Elevated last year to the elite Hall of Fame circle, Manalang had to prove that there is life outside the art-contest circuit. Gallery Genesis owners Ernie and Chichi Salas, who had given Manalang his first break, has posed that challenge and the result is his first solo show, "Ave Maria: A Homage," (Genesis Gallery, SM Megamall, until April 8), which pays tribute to one of the most popular and deeply venerated images of the Christian world: Mary the Mother.

Given Manalang's penchant for detail, the Marian subject easily lends itself to the kind of discipline Manalang has instilled in his art. The research work into the Marian images, and in particular, the Mother and Child, had taken half a year.

The Marian image, as the punctilious watercolorist sees her, is swathed in resplendent glory, be it after Jan van Eyck's "The Lucca Madonna" or "Nuestra Señora de Avila," so-named after the famous Spanish site, or proffering her indigenous lineage, in the "Mary of Biglang-awa" (Prompt Succor).

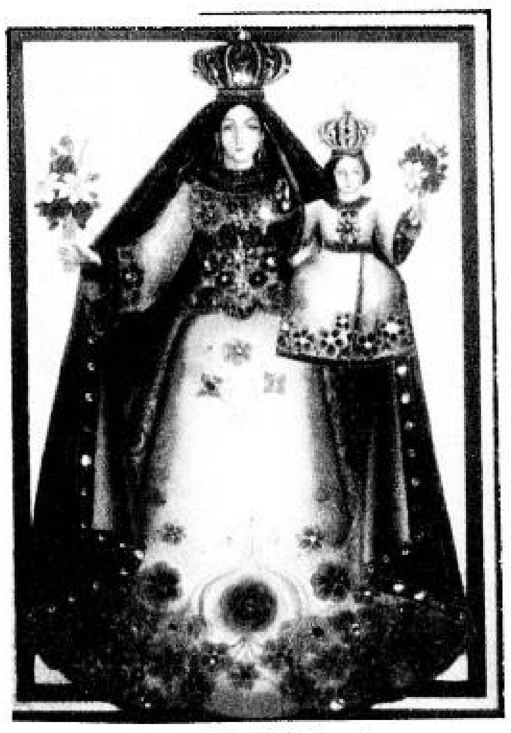
An exceptional piece is Manalang's interpretation of The Lady of Czestahowa (The Black Madonna), which passes muster not only for its fidelity to the original image, but also for its attempt to duplicate the creator's intentions in presumably foiling racism in the veneration of images.

In an attempt to highlight Mary's queenly countenance, Manalang saw it fit to make extensive use of faux jewelry, by using Swarovski crystals and stones for her accessories, such as the halo, crown and scepter, as well as the beads of the rosary she is shown clutching, or in highlighting parts of her veil. Set against a deep mauve or lavender background, these faux jewels sparkle and brighten the emotive figures.

Ever the perspicacious designer, a throwback to his architectural orientation, Manalang highlights the venerable subject with the most intricate framing designs. As some of the works are not exactly eye-catching in terms of size or by virtue of composition, the frames assume an integrative function, blending and merging with the the countenance of the subject.

The show clearly bolsters Manalang's renown as a very talented figurative painter.

Power of 5



"JEWELED Duet," by Noli Manalang

Bonding for art's sake, Cobie Cruz, Joey Ibay, Rico Lascano, Cid Reyes and Frenchman Michel Herbert explore the breadth and length of their canvases to give shape to their private visions of figures, spaces and other post-modernist concerns, in "Vibrations," (Galerie Astra, 210 LRI Business Plaza, N. Garcia St., Makati City, until March 31).

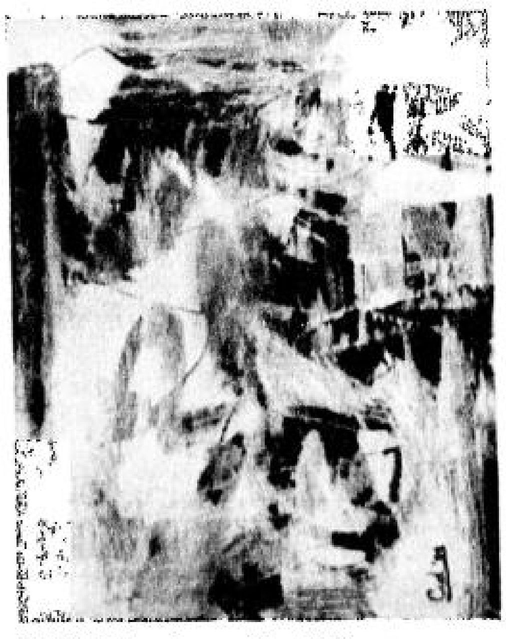
Cobie Cruz's acrylic rainscapes gleam in abstract expressionist ardor, the interplay of vertical-horizontal and hard gray-blues bespoking the body-mind integration, or, if you will, dissection. Once again, there's a relentless attempt to blur the lines between design and accident, the conscious and the subconscious merging, as it were, in exuberant bliss.

Lascano is manifestly more intuitive in his meditative inscapes that betray Zen Buddhism as the underlying creative principle. They are characterized by spare compositions, muted hues, and gossamer strokes. Done in acrylic and graphite on paper, they evoke an expansive, tranquil world, a personal universe that has been purged of all non-essentials, and the encumbrances of art are wisely camouflaged.

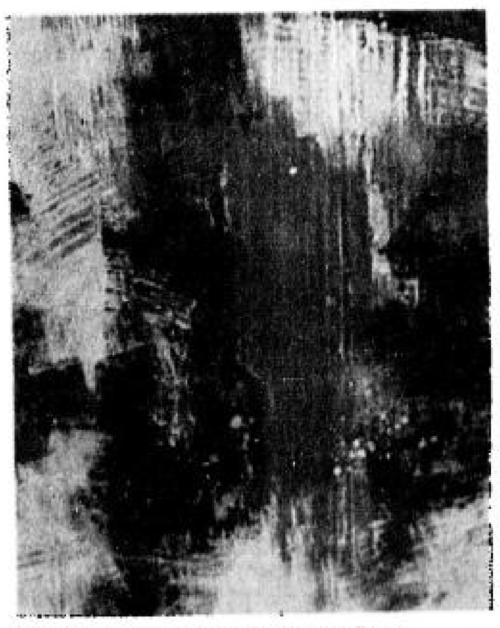
The French abstractionist Herbert, who, I gather, is connected with the French Embassy, has opted to work in the medium of plastic and double glass enamel, a most apt technique of literally showcasing what is interior/exterior vis-à-vis the body-mind correlation. Equally concerned with the dichotomy of the organic and the synthetic, Herbert has captured both the quiet and the fury, the seductive and the meditative, indeed the apposite sides of meditation and exaltation. A number of these works also incorporate objects culled from nature, such as dried leaves that, when pressed against the plastic medium, wittily expose their internal features.

Cid Reyes, who has 12 works, again pays homage to his icons. Amazing is his facility for juggling his work as an artist, writer and advertising executive. Likewise amazing is how his oeuvre has now taken a turn for the meditative and the intuitive. Indeed, the trials of the past months (he lost a child, who was prematurely born) must have been a truly painful experience for him. These new works in whites and grays have hardly a speck of color in them, save for the most restrained lurking in a crevice of the landscape.

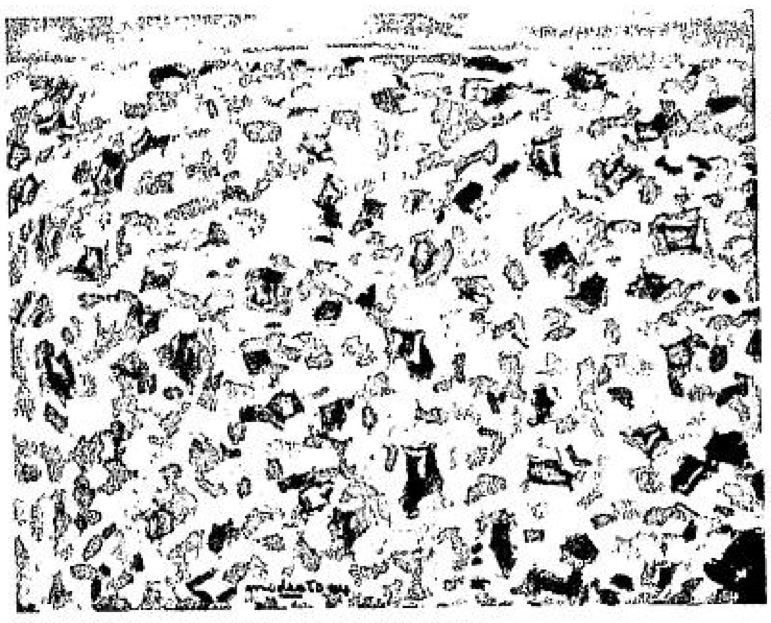
Ibay is now more concerned with the fullness of character rather than with the dynamics of ugliness. He has presumably overcome the initial shock of witnessing violence and cruelty, and now has opted to examine people from a different, optimistic vantage point. The brushwork is more sedate and circumspect, his solitary figures showing a more properly human visage. But his capacity to delve into character remains penetrating.



"TOKYO Landscape," by Cid Reyes



"RAIN Fragment" VI, by Cobie Cruz



"SYDNEY Harbor," by Fernando Modesto

Modesto's playful peregrinations

THE TITLE OF FERNANDO Modesto's newest show, "The Mystical Planet of Modesto," belabors what has been obvious all along. He exists in his own world, his sole freshly created universe. His is an art that is a planet unto itself.

There's nothing immodest in the title. On the one hand, it could be taken as the artist's characteristic self-deprecation, his fun sense of scorn that is often directed at himself. On the other, it shows his candor and earnestness, typical of the artist who seeks to fashion his own continent because of his perennial displacement.

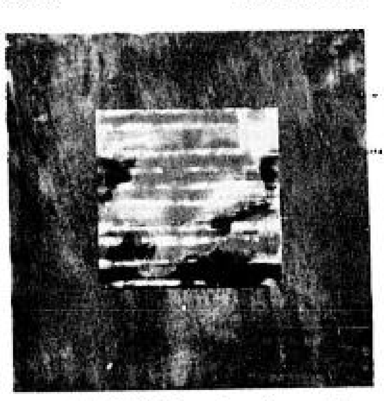
Based in Jakarta for several years now, Modesto prefigures in his works how he is here and elsewhere, at home and lost. His "Sydney Harbor" (oil on canvas, 120.8 x 150 cm) is a polychrome of dots and slashes in lemon yellows and pellucid blues, an evocation of beauty that is more dream than real. "Bali" is a sandy, creamy beach athwart a blue splatter of a sunset, like a child's alternative, playful world. And "Rain" is blue drips with white flushes, hardly torrential and calamitous which is often the case in these stormy climes.

Then there's his mysticism. Modesto's acrylic-on-paper depictions of the Buddha in meditation practically efface all the accoutrements of place and situation, the better to focus on the fixity of transcendence. His angelic figures seem to tiptoe around man's humdrum universe like naïf wanderers breezing through, as in "X and Y Universe" with its nude angel that seems to be playing ball and a crescent moon lying about, perhaps too hung up with heaven as to fall down to earth. "The Angel Peeping through the Window" shows heaven as an unremitting blue backstopped by a square—perhaps a window—where the view of the world seems colorful, perhaps more interesting and a little bit more odd than heaven.

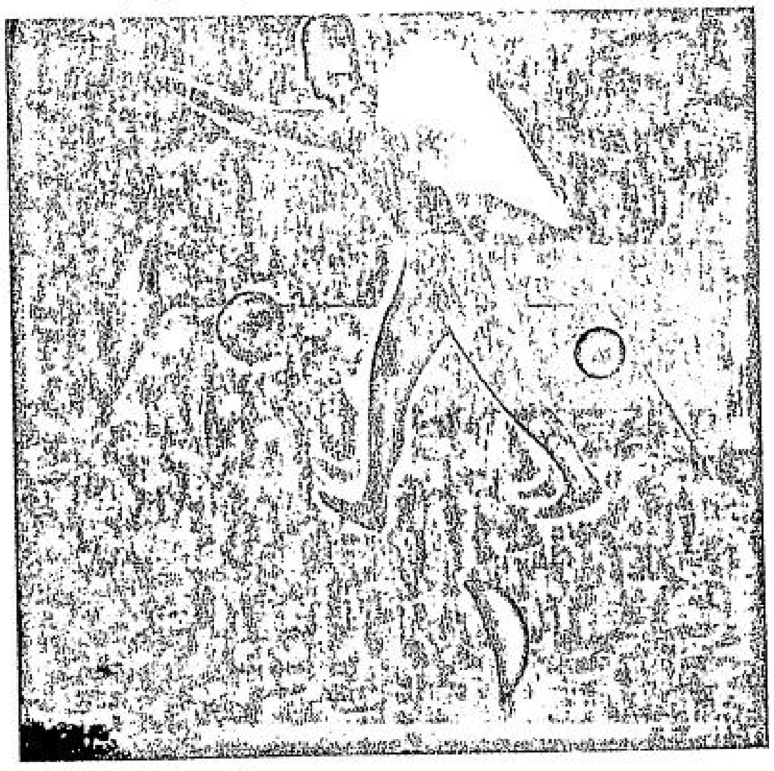
As always, Modesto, who reaped acclaim in the 1970s after graduating with a fine arts degree from the University of Santo Tomas for his surrealistic, playful forms, shows a strong suit with colors that complement the lyricism of his floating, dreamlike forms. His paint outlines either figurative images or abstract shapes set out on a flat composition; the looping lines are distributed evenly, the effect not exactly a feeling of balance, but of density and even flight. The viewer feels planetary, liberated, released from the encumbrance of earth.

"The Mystical Planet of Modesto" runs until March 29 at the Hiraya Gallery, 530 United Nations Ave., Ermita, Manila. Call 5233331. Log on to www.hiraya.com.

Lito Zulueta



"THE ANGEL Peeping through the Window"



"X AND Y Universe"

Sanso lecture at Podium

TOP ARTIST JUVENAL SANSO will lecture on composition and art appreciation on April 1, 6 p.m., at the second-floor lounge of The Podium.

The talk, organized by Galerie Joaquin, marks the culmination of Sanso's outreach program to inform art enthusiasts and viewers on various elements of composition in the arts.

In his talk, Sanso will relate the beauty of classical and contemporary art pieces with modern elements of advertising media. He will also authenticate paintings.

The event is part of a series of events at The Podium, which kicks off with a still life and portraiture sketching session to be participated by the Guevarra Group of Artists on March 29-30, and an exhibit of a few select pieces from various periods of Sanso's career.

Sanso is a world-renowned artist known for his rich and vigorous depictions of flowers and landscapes. His works are included in the collections of top museums in the world such as the Museum of Modern Art, the Metropolitan Museum of New York, the Smithsonian Institute, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the Art Institute of Chicago, the San Francisco Museum, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Musee d'art Moderne in Paris, and the Rosenwald National Gallery of Washington, among others.

Visit Galerie Joaquin Podium at Unit B12-B13, Lower/GL, The Podium. Call 6347954 or 7239253. Visit www.galeriejoaquin.com

Larger than life, Wilwayco-style

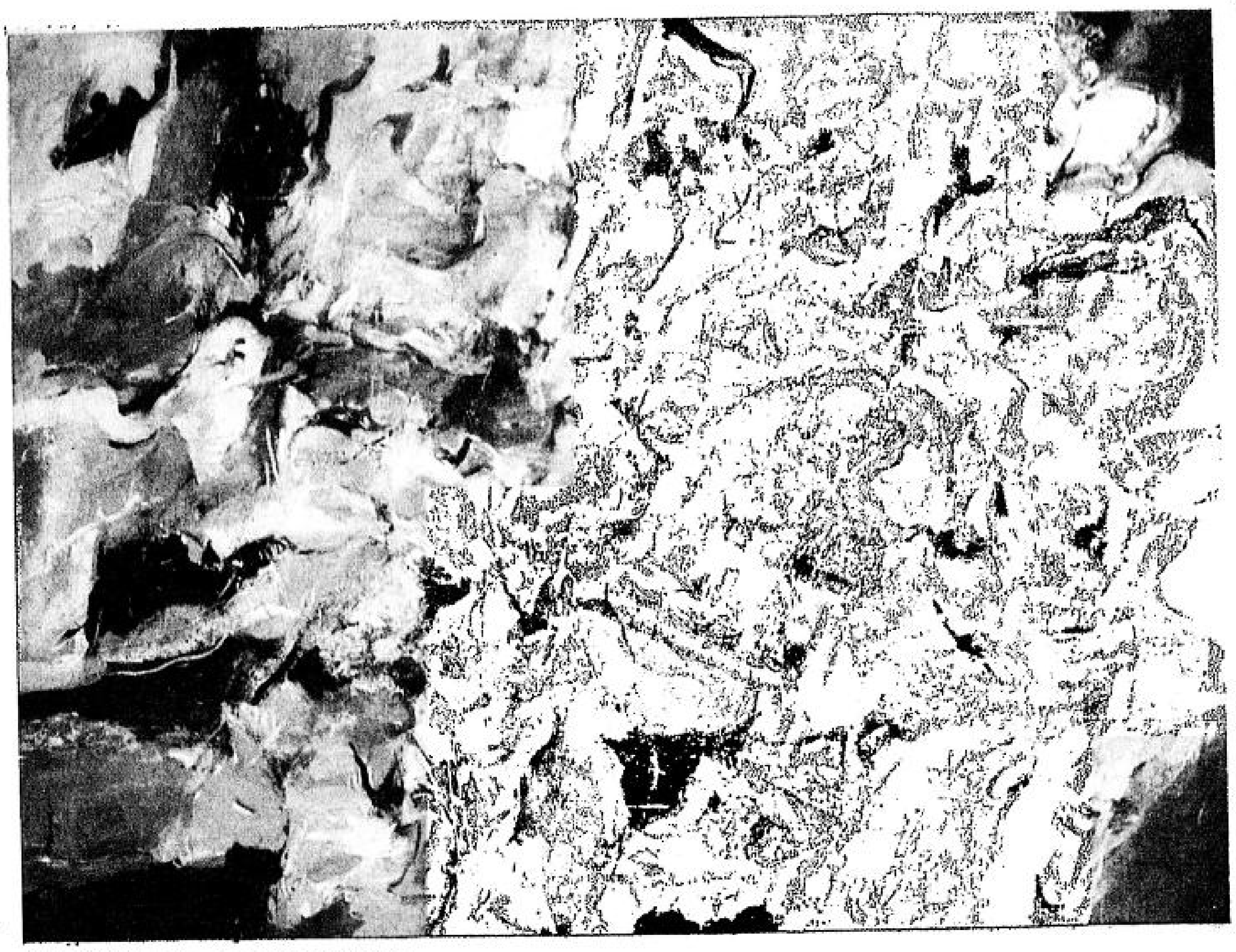
From page C1

ral-size works whose magnitude more than make up for the one-dimensionality of having been painted on a rectangular canvas.

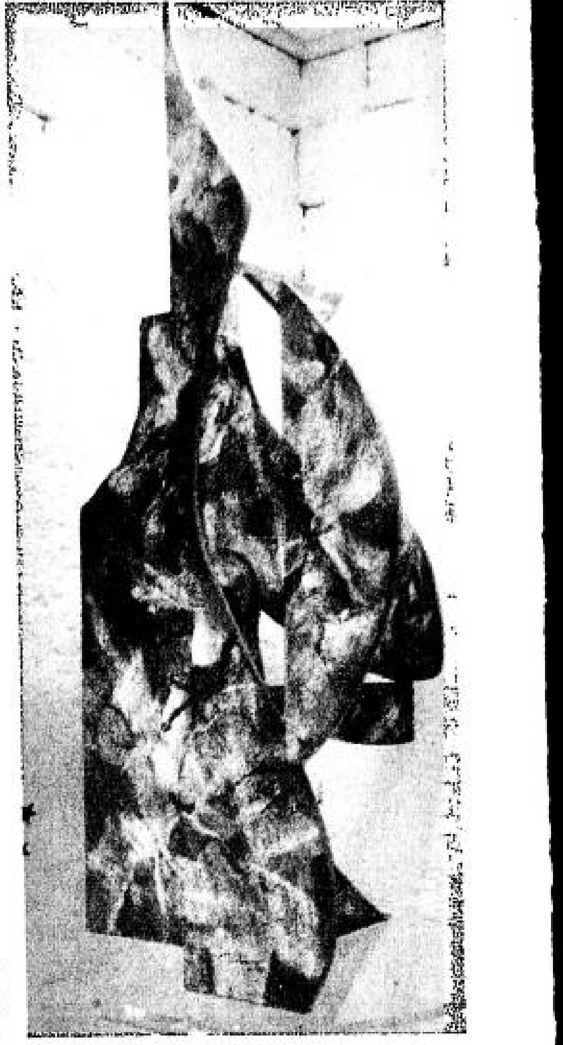
The INQUIRER has been afforded the chance to see two of the commissioned mural-size works, "Summer Solstice" and "Rite of Spring" (oil on canvas, both 12 x 8.5 ft), from the private collection of a retired banker and seasoned collector. (Wilwayco watchers might have caught a glimpse of the two works in the brochure that accompanied his "Moving Mountains" show last December at Galeria Duemila.)

The collector had actually commissioned Wilwayco for a large work. "Just give me something kinetic, with colors and textures," was the request. Uneasy with forcing whatever work would come from that commission on his patron, the artist instead did two works, leaving it to the latter to choose. After seven months, he presented the two works. "You gave me a problem," the collector said. "I like them both." So he chose both.

Now, the two works face one another in the collector's spacious living room, where are situated older Wilwayco works that have prefigured his increasing experiments with scales and shapes, such as the screens.



"SUMMER Solstice," oil on canvas, 2005



FROM the "Blues" series, shaped screen, 2003

Action painting

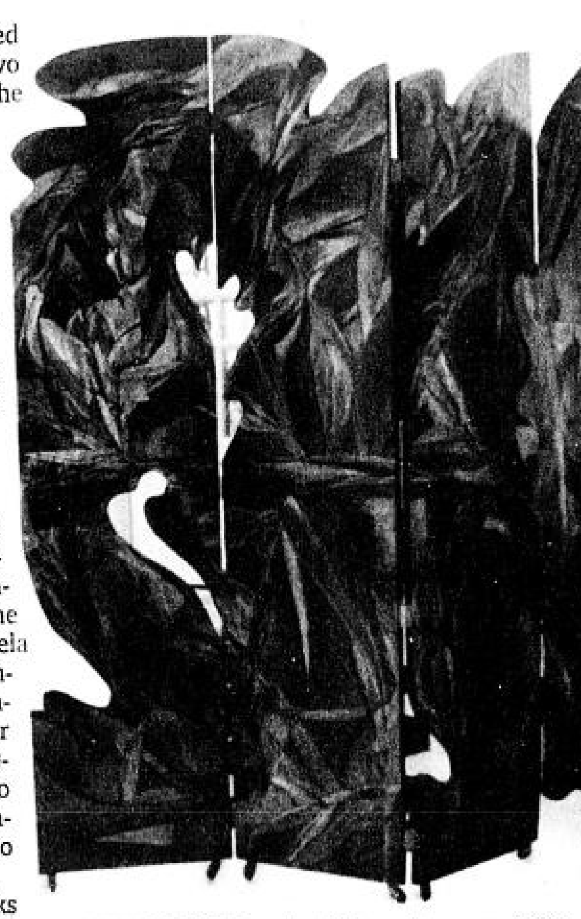
"Summer Solstice" and "Rite of Spring" impress with their colorful evocations of the seasons. "Solstice" conjures the singeing environment when the sun is at its greatest distance from the celestial equator by slabs of pagan oranges that seem to meld with acid whites in all their searing purity.

"Spring" is even more celebratory, the riot of yellows, oranges, blues and even blacks clashing in an explosion of revelry, the liquid blue stream in the left somehow providing a beacon of tranquility from so much Rabelasian incandescence at the center and the rest of the canvas.

But colors are half the story. "Solstice" and "Spring" burn and throb with the intensity of their "action painting," their gestural abstraction. Their heavily impastoed slabs of burning, swirling colors assert themselves with a compelling yet meditative intensity. They chart the artist's creative process, and it is easy to see that the marks, the strokes, the brushes, the drips, the paint itself and the surface of the canvas are all signs of the artist's active presence.

In some ways, too, there is erotic electricity in both works, which is somehow sublimated by Wilwayco's intensifying spirituality lately. The erotic-spiritual shapes move, swell and turn freely, yet have a distinct rhythmic relationship to the quaint calligraphy and colorful brushwork, like irrational desires finding an even keel, finding anchor in the spirit.

Of course, the largeness and robustness of spirit are also concretized in the sheer scale of the two works. To be sure, it was not the first time for Wilwayco to have worked on large works. As a student at the University of the Philippines, he was handpicked, along with Rock Drilon, Benjie Cabangis and Fred Liongoren, by José Joya to assist in the making of "Pagdiriwang," the Joya mural at the lobby of the Philippine International Convention Center.



"TROPICAL Paradise," shaped screen, 1995

WILWAYCO at work on "Ovals"

Eloquent ovals

Wilwayco's newest large-scale works continue his experiments with scale and shape. Installed over the weekend at the Fatima University in Valenzuela City are "Ovals," two oil-on-canvas murals (6.5 x 9 ft) commissioned by young collector Robert Bjorn Santos. (The INQUIRER got a preview of the two works as they were being finished by Wilwayco in his studio in Parañaque.)

At first blush, the new works strike one as filled with a powerful vitality, perhaps owing to their patron's youthful exuberance. Clearly the works follow through on the carnivalesque spirit of "Solstice" and "Spring," but with a decidedly more bacchanalian air, with slabs of purples and fuschias competing for attention.

Jarring and even dissonant color patches are embedded on the rich surface. The colors charge toward loose boundaries and threaten to spill over the borders, magnified by the oval edges that indicate the colors may have, indeed, sprung loose from the canvas, perhaps infecting the space outside with their inherent sense of fun. Indeed, the oval shape provides three-dimensionality to the works.

But there is also a quiet meditative air, as indicated by the dashes and highlights of white. We don't know if this owes to the gestation of the works: Wilwayco said he listened to Richard Stauss' "Also Sprach Zarathustra" while composing them. Many are familiar with the opening of Strauss' work since it was used in Stanley Kubrick's "2001: A Space Odyssey," and the triumphalistic passage somehow washes over the two works. But Strauss really called his work a "tone poem" so that it reveals different moods and states of mind, the better to portray the duality of the person, the genetic, earth-bound man aspiring to be the "Superman," the spiritual being.

Somehow, the oval shape articulates and embodies the spiritual quest, this voyage of going beneath the skein of things, this adventure of becoming. Kandinsky perhaps best gave speech to this when he wrote about modern art's faculty to "go beneath the skin of nature and touch its essence and content."

"The painter needs discreet, silent almost insignificant objects," Kandinsky said, rejecting classical art, like Laocoon's, which is too studied, too labored, too complete. "How silent is an apple beside Laocoon," he wrote. "A circle is even more silent."

Make that an oval, silent but eloquent.

Unlikely marriage of Social Realism and Dada

By Constantino C. Tejero

ANOTHER REMARKABLE autodidact in the Philippine art world is Ed Coronél.

Though he showed obvious artistic talent as a child (accomplished draftsmanship), he obeyed his parents' importuning not to go into Fine Arts (no money there) but instead take up Bachelor of Science in Physics in University of the Philippines, where he taught for seven years at its National Institute of Physics.

But then, talent will out. The youth frequented art galleries and studied the artworks, joined on-the-spot art competitions in school, and later jammed with Social Realists the likes of Neil Doloricon, Antipas Delotavo, Pablo Baen Santos—mentors who encouraged his painterly inclination.

"I started with realistic painting, *pero maraming mas magaling pa sa akin d'yan,* so I developed a different style," he shyly confesses, then proudly says: "I know how to handle watercolor. I can work with pastel, charcoal, acrylic, but what I mostly do is oil."

Now in his early 40s, Coronél is holding only now his first solo exhibition —"Karnabal sa Gallery Nine," 12 pieces in oil on canvas, until March 29, in Gallery Nine, at the Artwalk, L/4, Bldg. A, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City.

Here, the imagery is invariably a background of brown, ochre, umber or burnt orange swarming with biomorphs in bright and flat primary, secondary and neutral colors. Human and animal forms are recognizable but often they appear hybrid or amoeboid.

Carnivalesque imagery

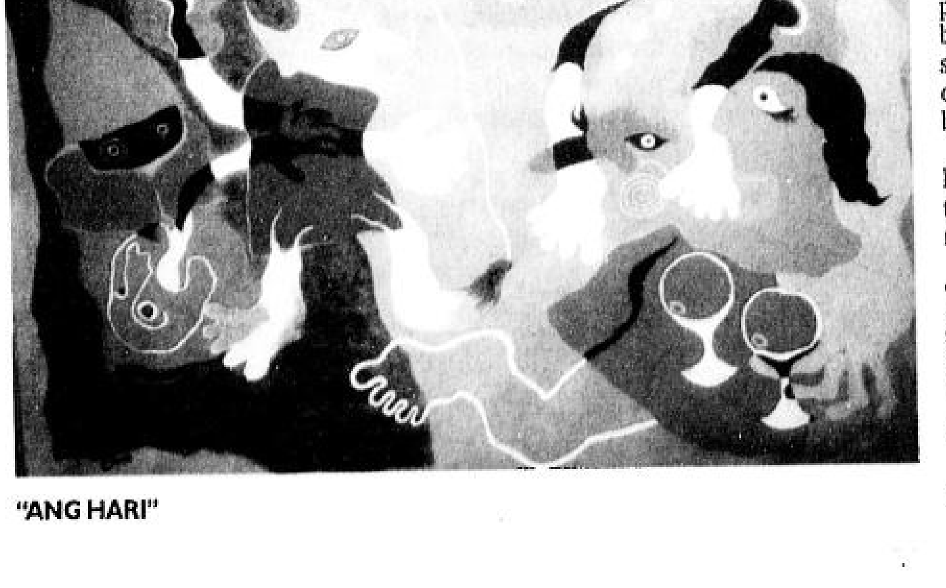
One sees that what the artist has developed for image-making, in visual style and graphic language, he learned from studying Picasso, Miró, Jean Arp, the Fauvists. In other words, wild-hued images of Dada imbued with Surrealism.

For five years now it is the style Coronél consistently employs in his art-making, producing witty compositions of whimsical figures in raucous setting. Yet one discerns in this carnivalesque atmosphere that the artist has not uprooted himself from his Social Realist roots.

This is obvious in pieces such as "Isang Makulit na Lumipas," depicting a man with clenched fist trapped in but struggling to escape a barbed-wire enclosure. One is washed with a sense of déjà vu when one thinks of what's happening in the streets these days and links the image to the martial-law years.

"Ang Hari," showing two groups of three on opposite sides of the pictorial frame, is a metaphor of social conflict. Of similar theme is "Ang Palayok," with three creatures grappling for possession of a golden pot.

The artist says these pieces are "about our people, politics, power and corruption," yet also about this people's "perseverance, knowledge of history, the possibility of self-redemption."

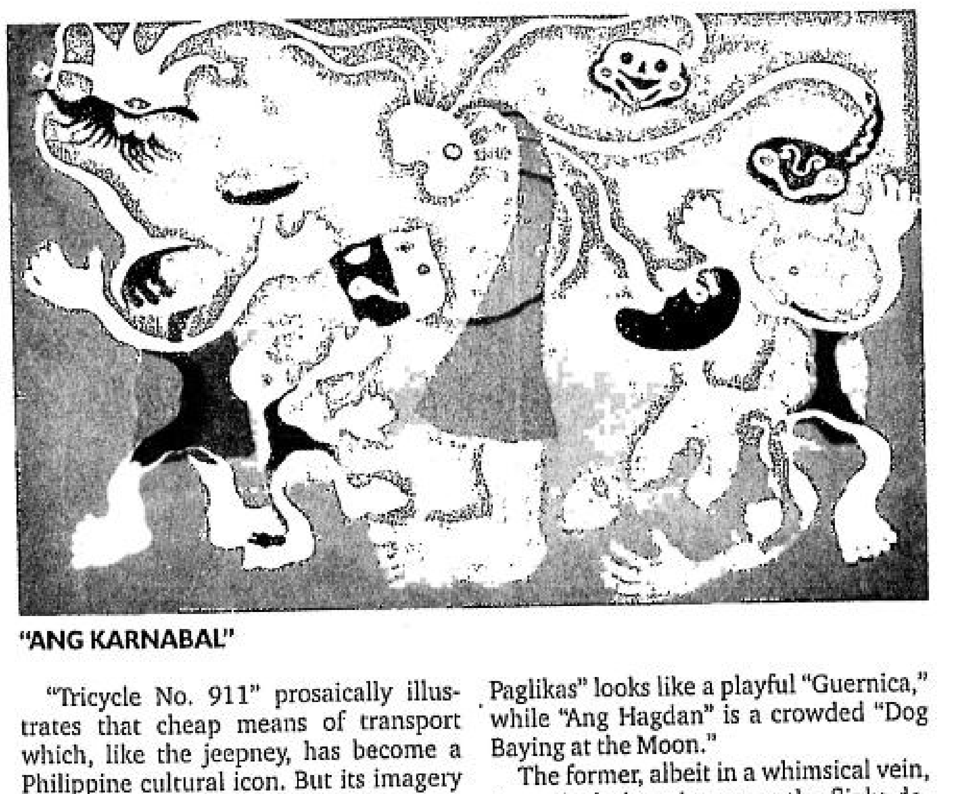


"ANG HARI"

Twisted genre pieces

The Social Realist strain is pervasive even in his genre pieces, and made more scathing when he puts a twist to genre.

Still lifes such as "Sidewalk Delicacies" and "Hepa Meals" look at first like humorous poster art or print ads, until one looks deeper and sees this poor man's feast for what it really is: food that breeds diseases, both life-giving and death-bringing.



"ANG KARNABAL"

"Tricycle No. 911" prosaically illustrates that cheap means of transport which, like the jeepney, has become a Philippine cultural icon. But its imagery of jumbled passengers and gas-masked driver, nailed with the allusive title, is as outlandish as it is too real.

"Isang Bagong Taon sa Bocaue" doesn't just show merry-making in the pyrotechnics capital of the Philippines, but also illustrates a firecracker explosion's aftermath with graphic depictions of torn limbs and a disembodied eye blinking in the sky like a lunar eclipse.

In "Ang Panabong ni Tatang," the sport has become so embedded in our culture that the veteran cockfighter has grown a rooster's head.

Certainly the most biting piece is "Mag-ina," a twisted twist on the religious theme of Mother and Child. Here a baby is taken care of by its surrogate mother, the television.

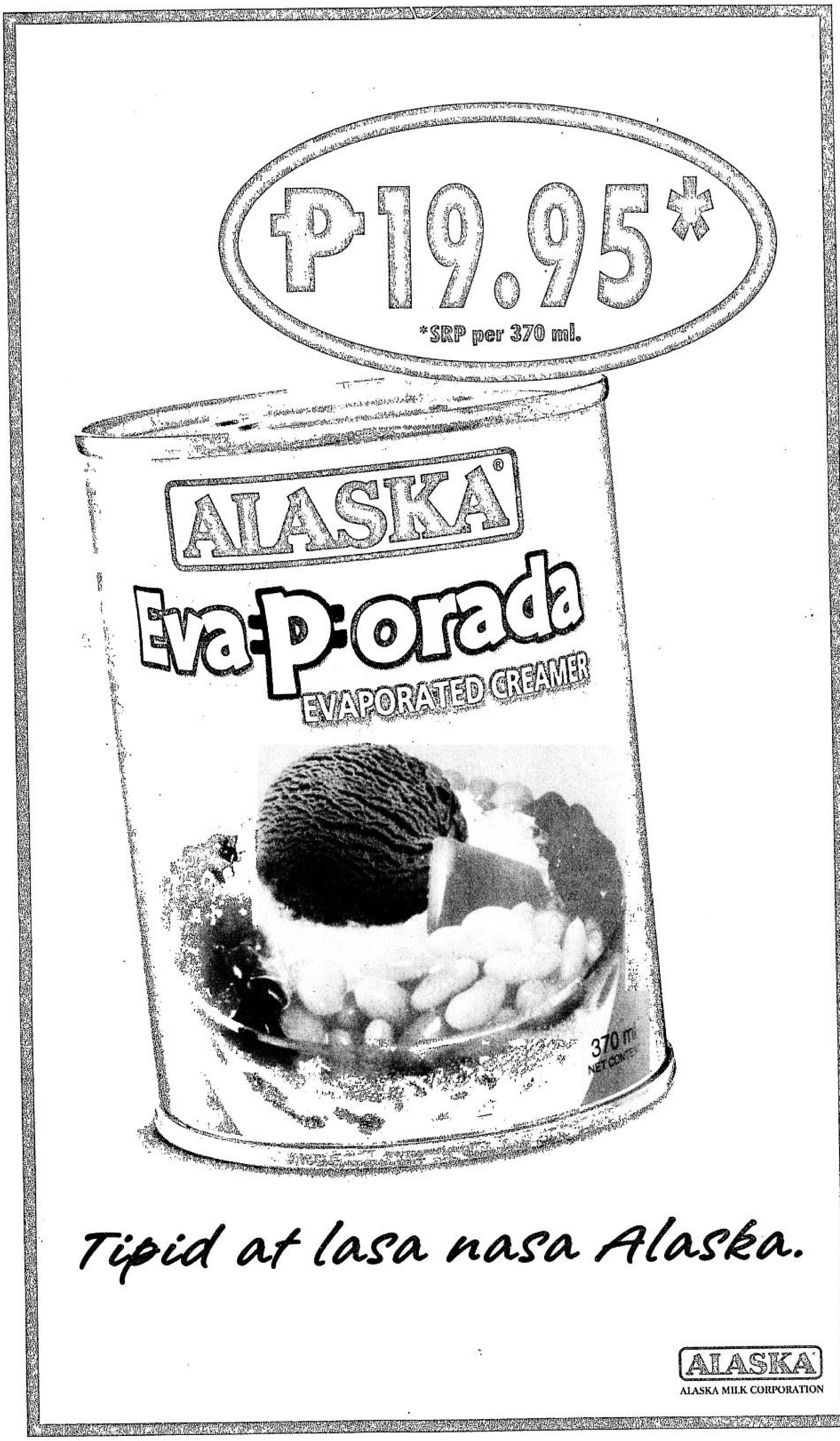
Referring landmark art

Two pieces visually refer to two monuments of European modern art: "Ang Paglikas" looks like a playful "Guernica," while "Ang Hagdan" is a crowded "Dog Baying at the Moon."

The former, albeit in a whimsical vein, is particularly poignant as the flight depicted shows a mother leading her four children across a barbed-wire fence. In the latter, various Boschean creatures scramble for a ladder that leads to nothingness.

Coronél says he chose brown as thematic color to show that all these pieces flow from a continuous stream of ideas and emotions: "The earthiness of brown signifies our soil and landscape, a most basic and powerful element that continually shapes our culture and traditions—like the rustic brown of a rural home, the cold brown walls of the city, the pervasive brown dust of the road and industry."

Now, that's an authentic Social Realist statement, and all-encompassing, too. More surprising, it comes from a physicist who's now practicing as an information-technology consultant.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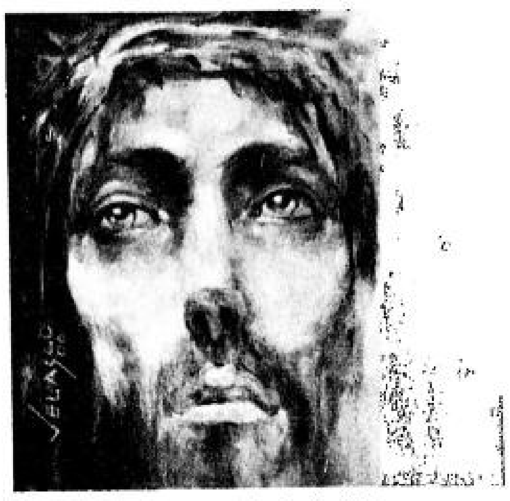
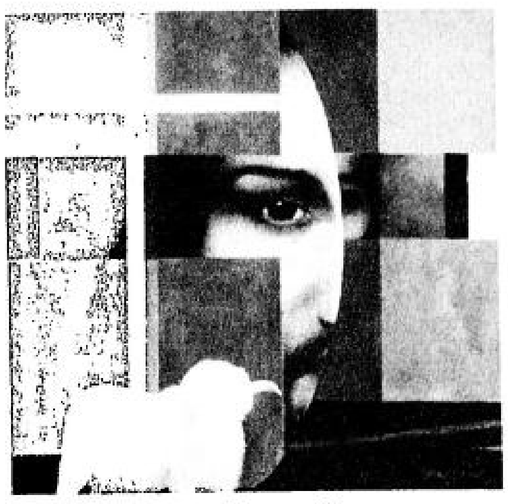

"BEHOLD the Man," by Lydia Velasco


"LAMB of God," by Norman Dreo

'Kristo' exhibit at Nine

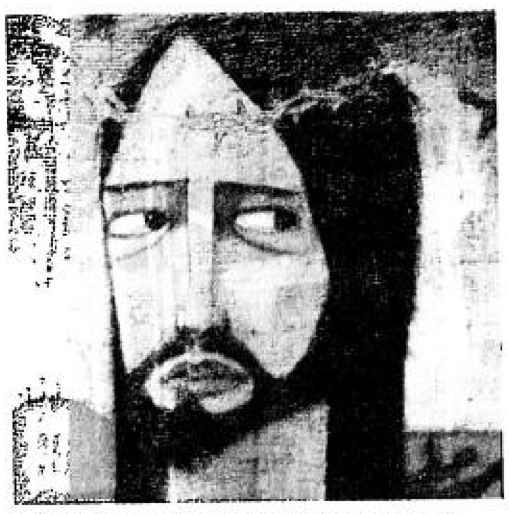
THE ANNUAL "KRISTO" EXHIBIT ORGANIZED by artist Salvador Ching will open on April 4. The show, which displays different artists' renditions of the passion of Christ, is titled "Behold" this year and is organized by The Artery as a tribute to young artist Romeo Forbes, who died last month of cancer of the blood.

Participating artists include Hermes Alegre, Renante Alejo, Bogie Alvarado, Jun Alvarez, Ral Arrogante, Julio Austria, Pandy Aviado, Aris Bagtas, Anton Balao, Jeps Belen, Art Bermido, Buen Calubayan, Roen Capule, Noel Catacutan, Pops Cenizal, Venerando Cenizal, Salvador Ching, Salvador Convocar, Fil de la Cruz, Robert Deniega, Ferdinand Doctolero, Norman Dreo, Anthony Fermin, Dante Lerma, Lindslee, Serafin Maddela, Agang Maganda, Anton Mallari, Enrico Marquez, Nicanor Masangkay, Jason Montinola, Kaye O'Yek, Roel Obemio, Wilfredo Offemaria, Fred Pelipada, Al Perez, Fred Ramirez, Cryz Rebutiaco, Omi Reyes, Tres Roman, Camille de la Rosa, Farley del Rosario, Rey Salamat, Jonahmar Salvosa, Bin Samonte, Jef Samonte, Elios Santos, Fidel Sarmiento, Aner Sebastian, Rodel Tapaya, Palma Tayona, Gonzalo Uy, Lydia Velasco, Dario Villaceran, and Emmanuel Villariba.

The exhibit is curated by Jocelyn Tullao of the University of Santo Tomas Museum of Arts and Sciences.

All works are priced uniformly. Part of the proceeds will go to the family of the late Romeo Forbes.

"Behold" runs until April 16. Call 6877302.


"BANAL na Pagtitimpi," by Rodel Tapaya

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Augusto F. Villalon

Augusto Villalon's Pride of Place column will resume publication next week.